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# THE CIVIL WAR ERA: 1850-1873

by Eugene H. Roseboom



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**A HISTORY  
OF THE STATE  
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VOLUME IV**

THE OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY











THE HISTORY OF  
THE STATE OF OHIO

# THE HISTORY OF THE STATE OF OHIO

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*Professor of History, Oberlin College*

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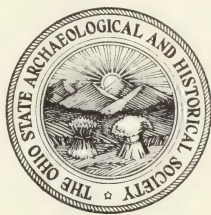
CIVIL WAR ERA

1850-1873

By

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*Associate Professor of History*  
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Ohio State Archaeological  
and Historical Society

*Columbus, Ohio, 1944*

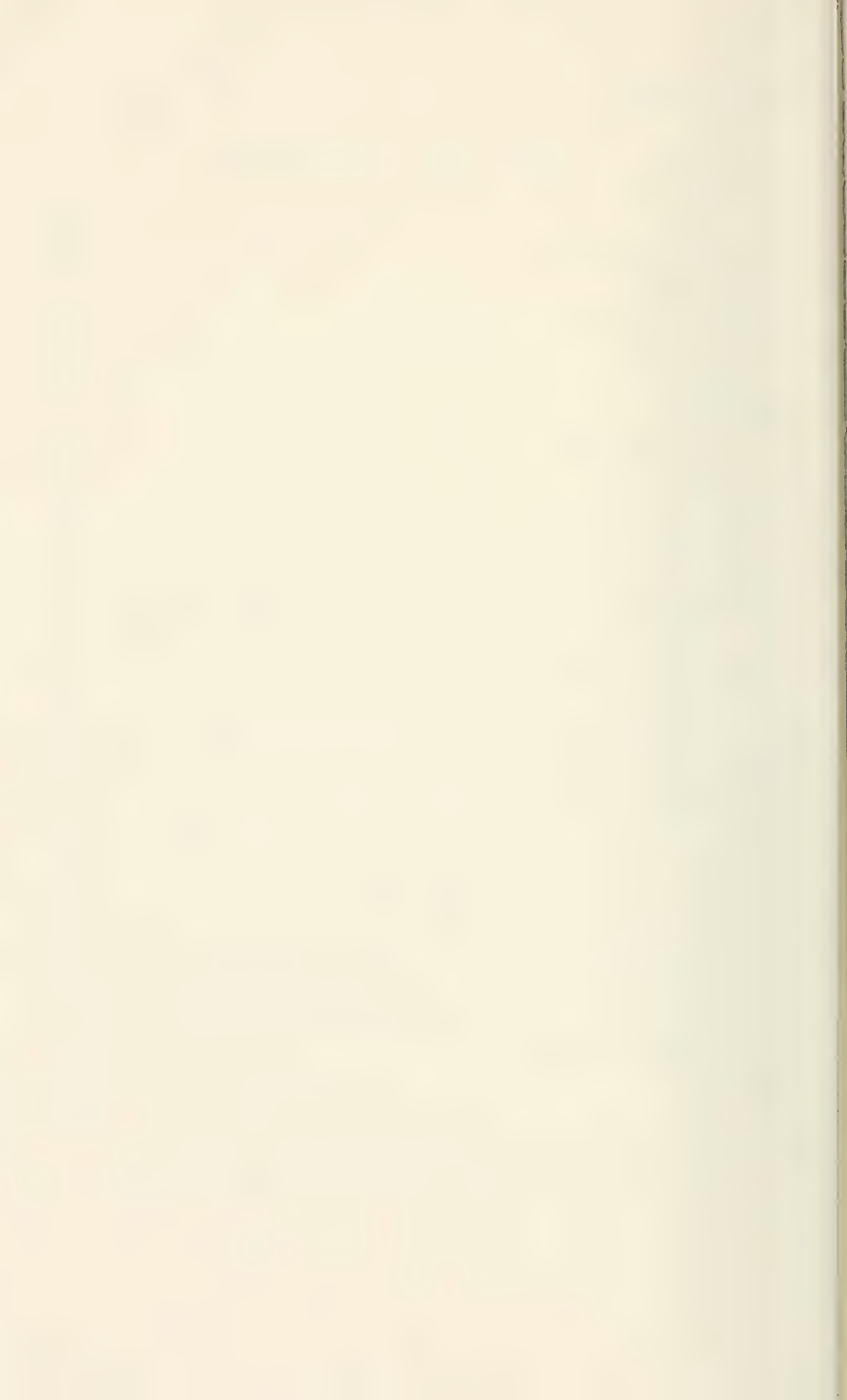


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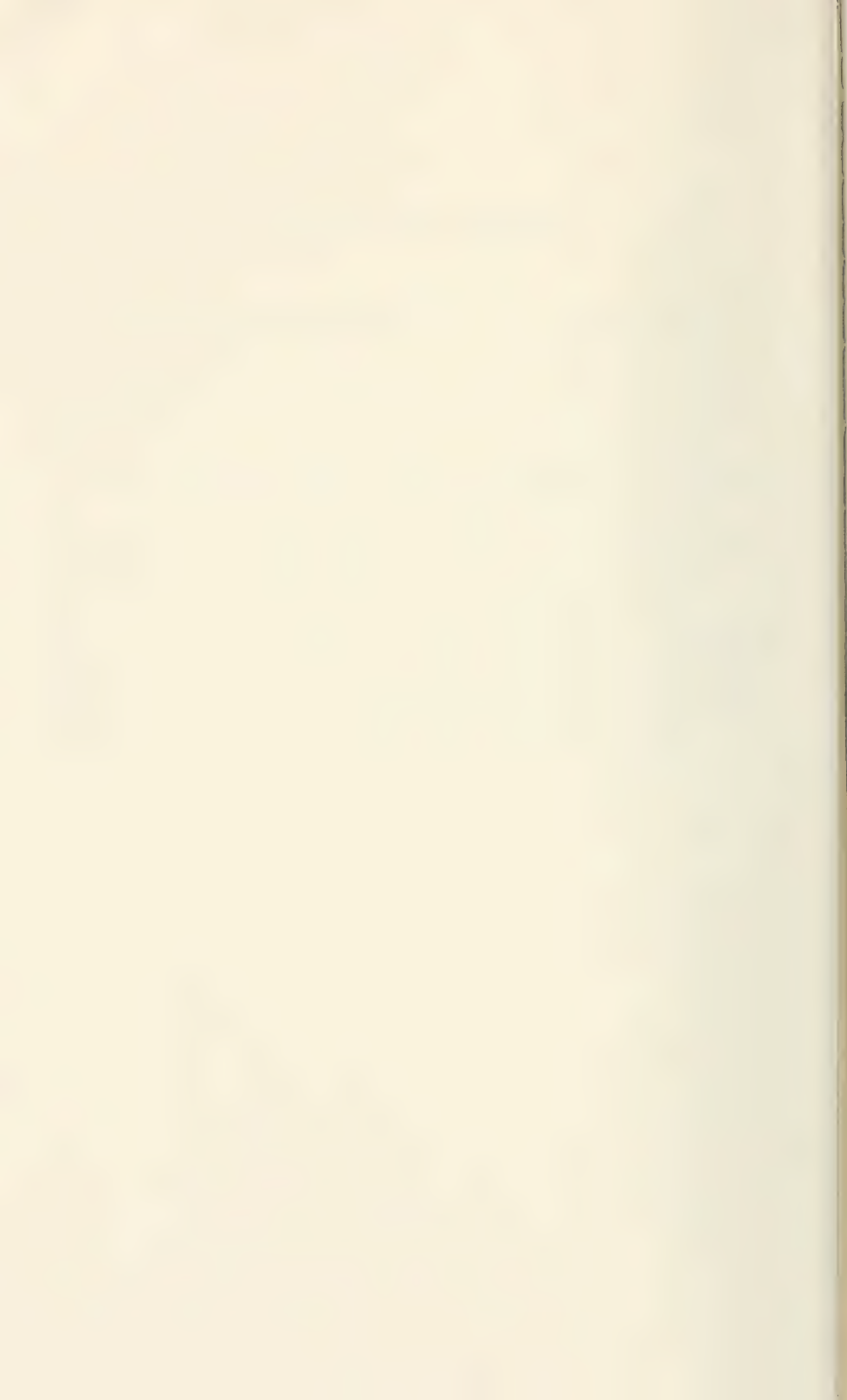
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# Editor's Introduction to Volume IV

THE years covered by this volume, in a sense, were revolutionary years, in the history of Ohio, for they mark the State's transition from a dominantly agricultural to an industrial economy. At no time in the history of the Commonwealth did Ohio occupy a more commanding position as a farming center than in 1850. By 1870, the phenomena of industrialization and urbanization were apparent in most parts of the State. The problems of city life—the worst and the best of the urban community—with the failures and politics of municipal government, slums, vice and poverty, as well as advances in the arts and wholesome cultural progress, were striking characteristics of the Ohio of the 1870's. Organized labor was demanding its place in the sun, the struggle between capital and labor became more pronounced, and the depression of 1873 was destined to reveal to Ohioans the complexities and maladjustments of modern America. Life on the farm had changed too, due to the gradual mechanization of agriculture and improved methods of farming. A revolution in transportation, marked by the abandonment of the canal for the railroad, further complicated the problems of the Buckeye Commonwealth.

Politically, the 1850's saw the end of an old order. The period was inaugurated by a new State Constitution in 1851. Under the impact of the Anti-Nebraska uprising and the rising tide of the abolitionist crusade, and a vigorous resurgence of nativism under the name of the Know-Nothings, a party revolution occurred in Ohio before the Civil War which was unique in the history of Ohio politics. The slavery controversy left its blight on the political parties for years, and affected many State issues. Intrastate sectionalism further complicated the political pattern, and in the course of the controversies, many of the leaders and many of the issues in



Ohio assumed national importance. The Civil War period produced coalitions and compromises and strange party alliances which make the political history of these decades amazingly complicated. The Republican triumphs of the years 1854-1860 in Ohio greatly affected the other states, and it is conceivable that a defeat here, when the Republican party was still without an adequate national organization, might have crushed the movement in its infancy. Lincoln was repudiated by Ohio in 1862, and endorsed in 1864, and the Peace Democrats and Copperheads of the State were led by perhaps the most brilliant political triumvirate Ohio has ever seen.

The years from 1850 to 1870 also witnessed great changes in education and the emergence of a higher culture, marked by literary and journalistic activities, the popularity of the lyceum and the theater, advances in the fine arts and in the educational program of the State, the rise of organized and professional sports and reform movements in the field of woman's rights, labor, international peace, the treatment of the poor, the criminal and the insane, and temperance, that perennial football of Ohio politics.

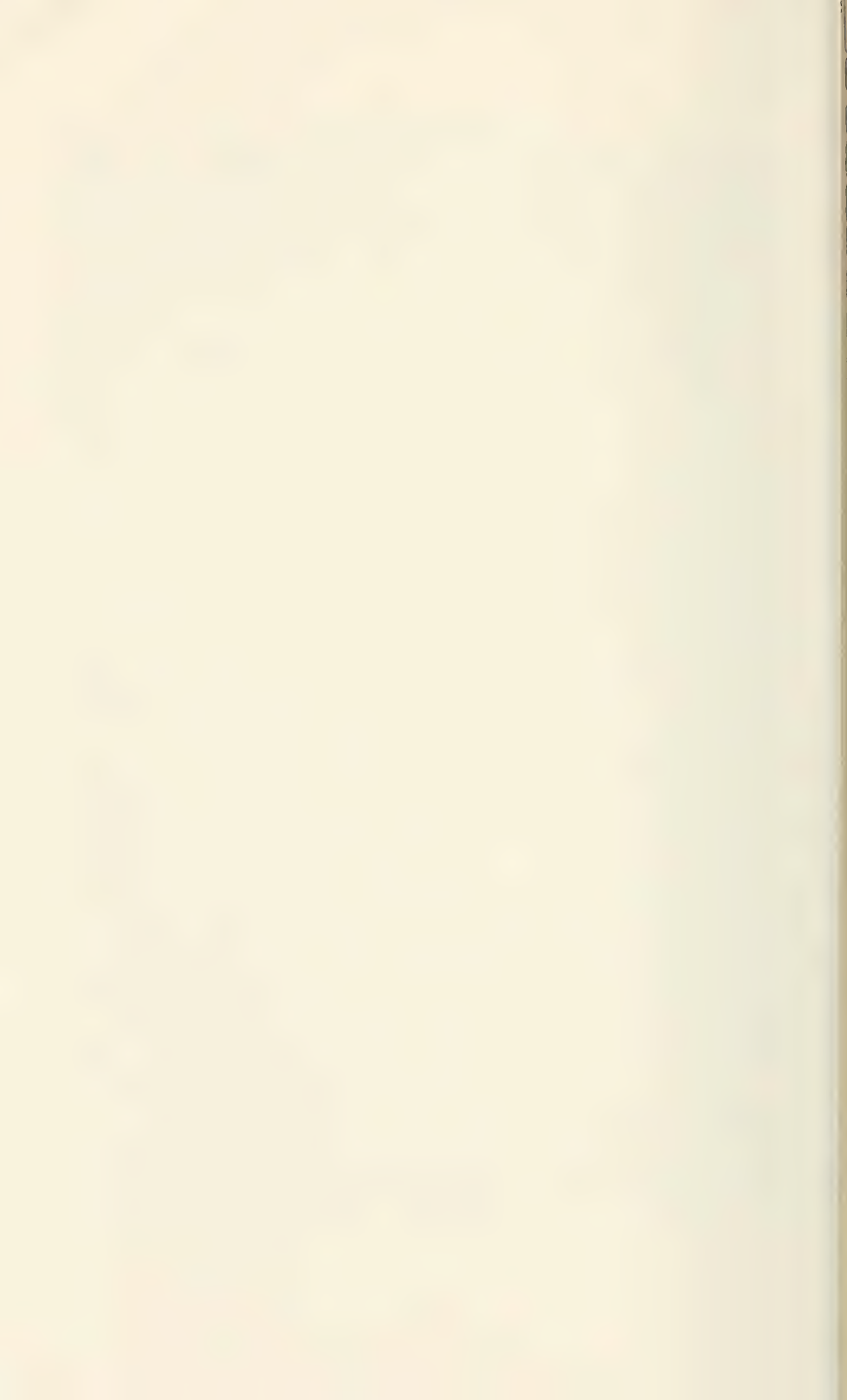
The Civil War and the post-war years brought further party and intrastate realignments, the controversy over Negro suffrage, and the belated espousal by the Democrats of new issues which they called the "New Departure." By the 1870's, the Republican party had lost much of its crusading vigor; its old leaders were dead or in retirement; and the party was not only content to rest on its laurels as the savior of the Union and the emancipator of the slaves, but staunchly defended the status quo, in close alliance with powerful new business interests. The Ohio Democrats, in the meantime, had abandoned most of their Jacksonian radicalism, and had become a conservative and compromising and opportunist opposition party. Both parties were to be rudely awakened from their complacency by the depression which followed 1873.

Professor Roseboom is the joint author with Professor Francis P. Weisenburger of the first good one-volume *History of Ohio*, published nearly ten years ago. He has long made the period from 1850 to 1870 the special subject of his research and publication. This

volume is the product of years of study and teaching in this middle period of Ohio history. As in other volumes in this cooperative enterprise, social, economic and intellectual history has been emphasized quite as much as the narrative of party politics.

CARL WITTKE

OBERLIN COLLEGE.



## Preface

THE editor's introduction summarizes so clearly the character of this volume that further elaboration is unnecessary here. Though the years 1851-1873 constitute a revolutionary period in Ohio's history, the story of these changes has hitherto been told in but superficial or fragmentary fashion. Consequently the task of the author involved both fact-finding research and synthesis. Fortunately his unpublished doctoral dissertation, approved at Harvard in 1932, supplied much material on the decade of the 1850's. Even so, much research had to be done in newspapers, State documents and manuscripts, supplemented by a few local histories, memoirs and biographies. Except for Ohio's part in the Civil War, the economic aspects of banking and currency to 1860, State finances, educational legislation, and a few minor aspects of some other topics, secondary writings were non-existent or of slight value. This compelled a heavy reliance on newspaper materials for light on most social and economic problems and for much of the politics of the period. The Cleveland Newspaper Digest, prepared by the Ohio Works Progress Administration, proved to be invaluable in this connection, particularly for the post-Civil War years. However, to avoid confusing the reader, footnote references have been given directly to the Cleveland newspapers, rather than to the Digest, since many of them were examined at first hand.

To write a general history directly from source materials without benefit of the synthesis and interpretation of scholarly specialists in many phases of the work increases the likelihood of errors and omissions; yet the author has not hesitated to express honest judgments where they seem justified and to interpret facts as well as to state them. He cheerfully accepts full responsibility in all such matters. In some cases, such as the labor movement and the woman's rights crusade, the materials were so scattered—chiefly, brief items in many newspapers—that a complete account could hardly be written.



The space devoted to political history in the later chapters is to be explained on two grounds: first, the revolutionary developments in politics and their vital relationship to the great sectional controversy raging between North and South; and secondly, the use of the framework of political history to chronicle the important events of the period that did not lend themselves to topical treatment. For example, the anti-foreign, anti-Catholic movement of the middle 1850's was so largely political in character that it was treated as a phase of party history. The narrative history of the Civil War years is also included in the political story, as such matters as volunteering and conscription, public opinion toward the war, military arrests, and invasion, real or threatened, could not well be separated from the struggles of Copperheads and Unionists.

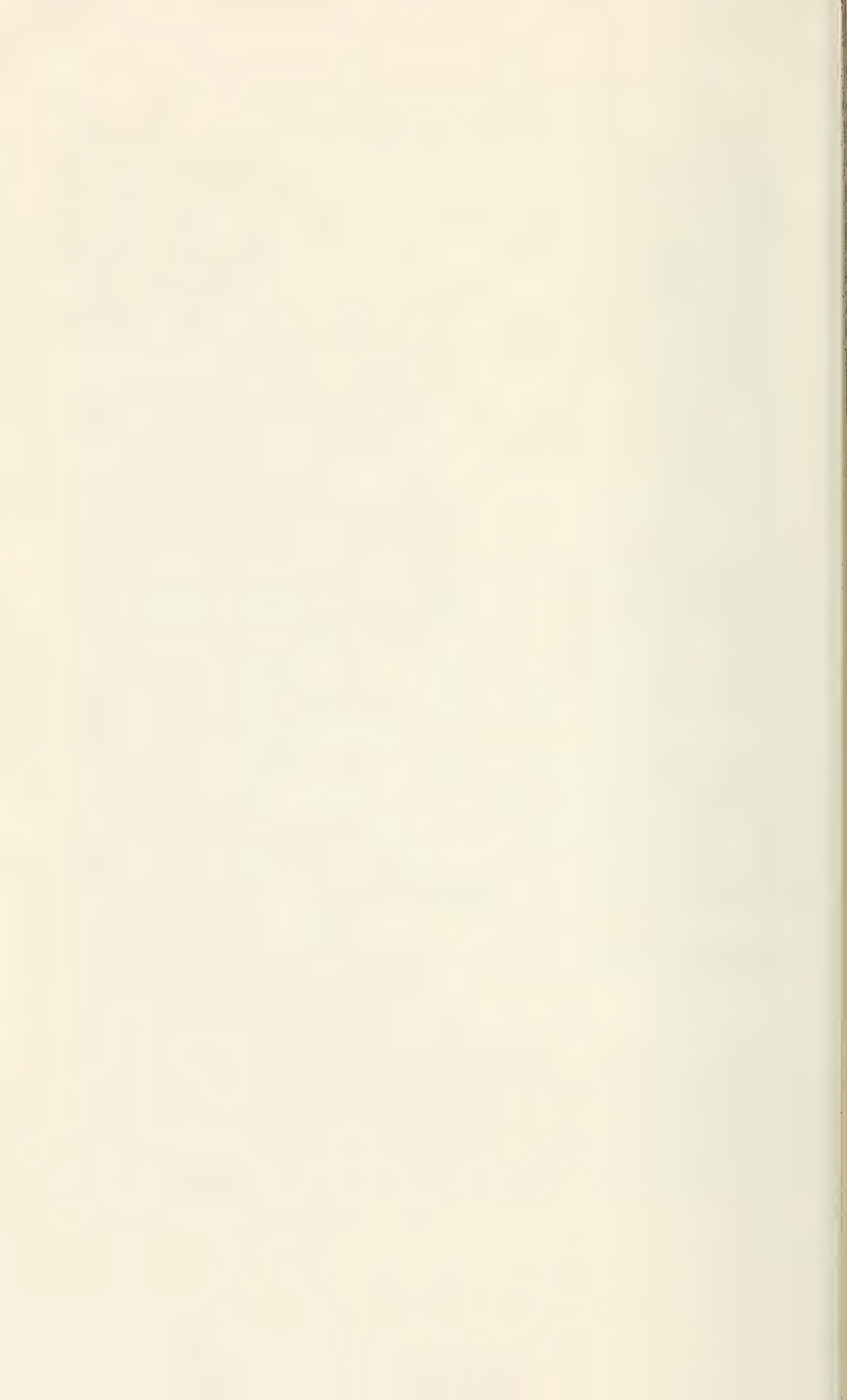
In accordance with the editorial policy of this series, footnote references have been kept to a minimum. Citations have been made to secondary accounts, where satisfactory, rather than to source materials, which may also have been consulted. Usually one reference has been given, though several may have been used. This may explain why, in a few places, the author has given a different interpretation from the footnote citation.

Many persons have contributed to make this volume possible. Dean Carl Wittke of Oberlin, general editor of the series, deserves special mention for his editorial advice and endless patience with a procrastinating author. Professor Francis P. Weisenburger of the Ohio State University, whose volume in the series served as the model for this work, gave much friendly counsel and made many helpful suggestions. Professor John S. Hare of the same institution graciously permitted the author to make use of his manuscript study of Allen G. Thurman. Several members of the staff of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society rendered valuable assistance: Dr. Harlow Lindley, secretary, editor and librarian of the Society, who repeatedly removed obstacles in the way of the completion of the series; Miss Bertha E. Josephson, editorial associate, to whom fell the arduous task of preparing the manuscript for publication and whose careful editorial supervision caught

many errors of form and phrasing though she disclaims responsibility for the author's style, particularly his stubborn insistence on beginning sentences with "but" and "however"; Mr. Clarence Weaver, editorial assistant, who prepared the index with the skill of the specialist in that important but burdensome type of work; Miss Helen Mills, reference librarian, who was ever courteous and helpful in making available the resources of the library; and Dr. Lindley's secretary, Mrs. Margaret Stutsman, who prepared several maps from the author's rough drafts. He is indebted also to the Ohio State University Library, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Widener Library at Harvard, the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Library of Congress for the use of their facilities. Dr. Curtis Garrison and Dr. James H. Rodabaugh of the Hayes Memorial Library at Fremont were particularly helpful in placing the Hayes manuscripts at the author's disposal and in making suggestions as to their use. He is in debt also to Professor Frederick Merk of Harvard University, who supervised his doctoral dissertation, "Ohio in the 1850's" and gave him a valuable lesson many years ago in the writing of history. The author desires also to acknowledge his appreciation of his family's loyal support. His young daughter, Marjorie, valiantly and carefully copied a number of quotations and his wife, Thelma Matheny Roseboom, spent many hours typing the manuscript and correcting crudities of style. Many of his students aided with theses and seminar reports, and these have been given due credit in footnotes.

EUGENE H. ROSEBOOM

COLUMBUS, OHIO, August 16, 1943.



THE  
CIVIL WAR ERA





1. OHIO CIVILIANS IN NATIONAL AND STATE COUNCILS

## CHAPTER I

# Industrial Ohio

IN 1896, an eminent American man of letters, William Dean Howells, native of Ohio, made these trenchant observations about the Ohioans of his youthful days, the 1850's: "Very likely people were less bent on the pursuit of wealth in those days, because there was less chance to grow rich, but the fact remains that they were less bent in that direction, and that they gave their minds to other things more than they do now. I think those other things were larger things, and that our civic type was once nobler than it is. It was before the period of corruption, when it was not yet fully known that dollars can do the work of votes, when the votes . . . outnumbered the dollars, and more of us had the one than the other." <sup>1</sup>

Though Howells may have exaggerated the virtues of the older generation, his general conclusion was correct. The idealism of the 1850's was engulfed by the materialism of the Civil War and the dazzling prosperity that followed. As industry spread its pall of smoke over the Ohio landscape and railroad linked farm and village and city, capital and labor and farmer profited, but new problems arose to plague succeeding generations of Ohioans. Old ways of life were altered, in many respects for the better, but the disappearance of the reforming spirit of pre-war days and the weakening of the moral fibre of political leadership, more evident in the seventies and eighties than in the immediate post-war years, were serious losses. The party that had freed the slave, saved the Union, and given the African civil and political rights, began to alter its character under the stresses and strains of a changing economic world, while its opponents tried to make a virtue of expediency. The story of these transition years from 1850 to 1873 is the theme of this volume.

<sup>1</sup> William Dean Howells, *The Country Printer* (privately printed, 1896), 45.

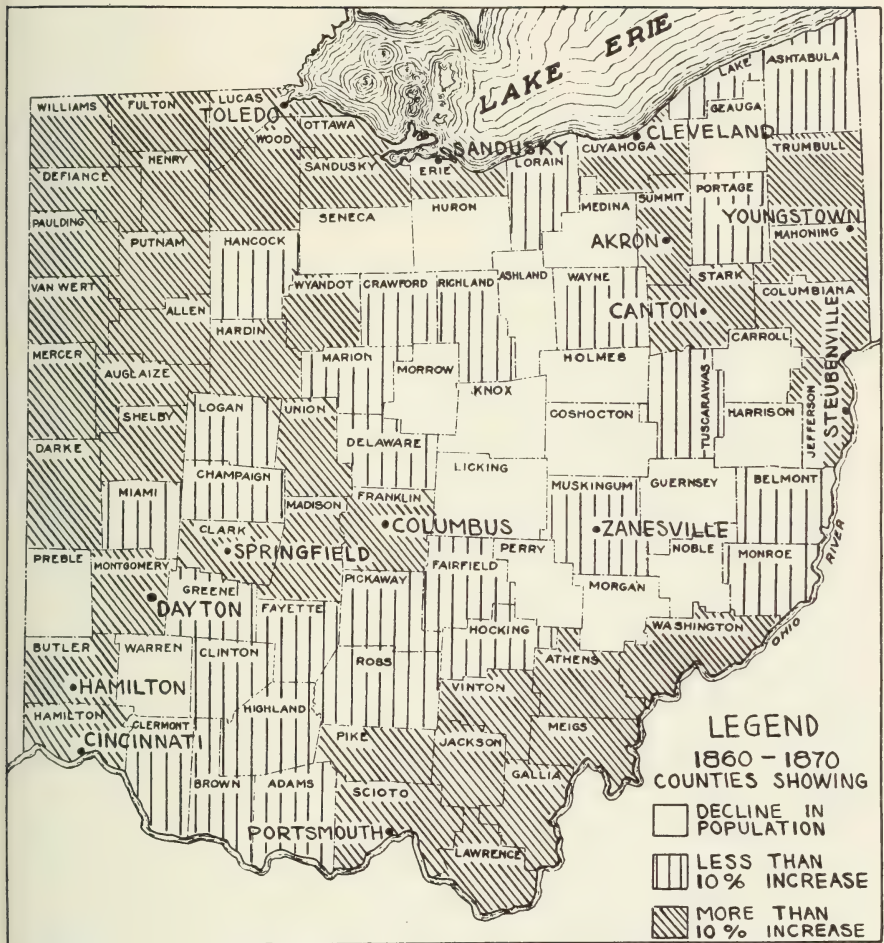
In 1871, at the request of the Secretary of State of Ohio, General James A. Garfield, a member of Congress from the Nineteenth Ohio District and a former college president, wrote a letter analyzing the census report of Ohio's population, just made public. The letter was printed in the secretary's statistical report for 1871.<sup>2</sup> Garfield noted the declining rate of growth of Ohio and thought that it pointed toward a stationary population. In eighteen counties there had been a numerical decrease between 1860 and 1870, in thirty-seven an increase, and in thirty-three the population was almost stationary.

Garfield saw three causes for the increases in the thirty-seven: the settlement of unoccupied lands, the development of mining and manufacturing interests, and the growth of cities. The first explanation fitted seventeen western and northwestern counties; the second applied to five in the Hanging Rock district of the south and to four in the Mahoning Valley section of the northeast; the third to eleven counties containing important cities. Over half of the increase in the decade came from this third group.

In general, Garfield's observations were correct, but his belief that the Buckeye State was tending toward a stationary population was not borne out by its subsequent growth. He showed that Ohio had given to other states 806,983 inhabitants and had received from them and from other nations 822,947, and that its growth in the ten years, 1860-1870, had been largely urban. Yet Garfield could not realize the extent to which industrialization and urbanization would go. He could not foresee that in the next half century Ohio's population would more than double itself.

The age of industry for Ohio was just dawning when Garfield wrote. The population statistics of the decades preceding 1870 portrayed the rapid growth of an agricultural Commonwealth with an abundance of fertile lands. The rates of increase then were as follows: 1840 — 62%; 1850 — 30.3%; 1860 — 18.1%; 1870 — 13.9%.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary of State, *Statistical Report, 1871* (Columbus, 1872), 142-50. The statistical reports were combined with the annual reports of the Secretary of State when that official took over the duties of the Commissioner of Statistics in 1869, but were separately paged.



MAP 1. POPULATION SHIFTS, 1860-1870  
 Based upon census figures.

As a farming State, Ohio, had thus reached maturity, but the industrial revolution was only beginning. The general statistical picture of population growth in 1870 was misleading. The glow of furnace and rolling mill, the smoke of factory, the roar of locomotive, the ever-increasing clatter of hoofs on newly paved streets, and the bright, clear light of the coal oil lamp in the homes reveal



better than population statistics the changes of the era of the Civil War. The Buckeye State was a young giant who had merely paused to gird up his loins for new tasks.

While in most respects the years from 1850 to 1873 were revolutionary years in Ohio's history, the general character of the population, on the other hand, underwent no striking changes. Numbers of Ohioans moved to Illinois, Iowa, Kansas and other western states to be replaced by newcomers from the older states and from Europe, but the contents of the melting pot were not much disturbed thereby. Ohioans in 1870 were of much the same stock as in 1850. The rapid growth of certain cities, the development of mineral districts, and the settlement of the northwestern counties had not altered in any marked degree the character of the population as a whole.

In 1850, 1,980,329 people lived in the Buckeye State, of whom 1,757,746 were native-born Americans; in 1870, the total population had risen to 2,665,260, a modest growth, with 2,292,767 of these native-born. The foreign-born constituted 11.15 per cent in 1850, 14.03 per cent in 1860, and 13.98 per cent in 1870. In the first two years cited, Ohio had a slightly higher percentage of foreign-born than the Nation as a whole, but by 1870 it was a little lower than the national average, then 14.4 per cent. According to the census of 1850, approximately six out of ten Ohioans (61.56 per cent) were born in the State; in 1870 this had risen to almost seven out of ten (69.12 per cent).<sup>3</sup> The great majority of Ohioans were, therefore, either natives of the State or long-time residents.

Ohio's total population had increased 18.1 per cent between 1850 and 1860, and only 13.9 per cent between 1860 and 1870. These were far below the rates of increase for the Nation and were the smallest in the State's history down to that time. Not until the 1890's was the percentage of gain in a decade as small as that for the 1860's. Without cheap lands to draw settlers as in earlier decades and with industrial development as yet unable to do more

<sup>3</sup> *Ninth Census of the United States, Statistics of Population* (Washington, 1872), 299, 332.



than counteract the loss of population due to the westward migration of Buckeyes, Ohio's rate of growth had slowed down until it was the lowest for two decades of any of the large states. Ohio was still third in the Union in population, but Illinois had become a close fourth and New York and Pennsylvania were drawing farther ahead.

Only one element in the population showed a striking increase. In 1850, there were 25,279 Negroes in the State. In 1870, 63,213 were so classified.<sup>4</sup> From less than 1.3 per cent of the total population, the colored element had thus increased to 2.37 per cent. This was concentrated chiefly in the southern half of the State and the largest increase had come in the 1860's. Hamilton, Greene, Ross, Gallia, Franklin, Brown and Clark counties each had over two thousand colored inhabitants. While Hamilton, containing Cincinnati, was first, Greene had more in proportion to population than any other county. Its county seat, Xenia, had 1,690 colored residents; here was located Wilberforce University, Ohio's only colored institution of learning.<sup>5</sup> The Republican *Xenia Torch Light* deprecated the influx of Negroes into the county, but it continued nevertheless.<sup>6</sup> The movement of southern Negroes into the North was far smaller than had been predicted, but it was a major political issue for several years, together with the issue of Negro suffrage, as will be shown in later chapters. Seldom has such a small element of the population been cast in a role so important in politics as was Ohio's African group in the 1850's and 1860's.

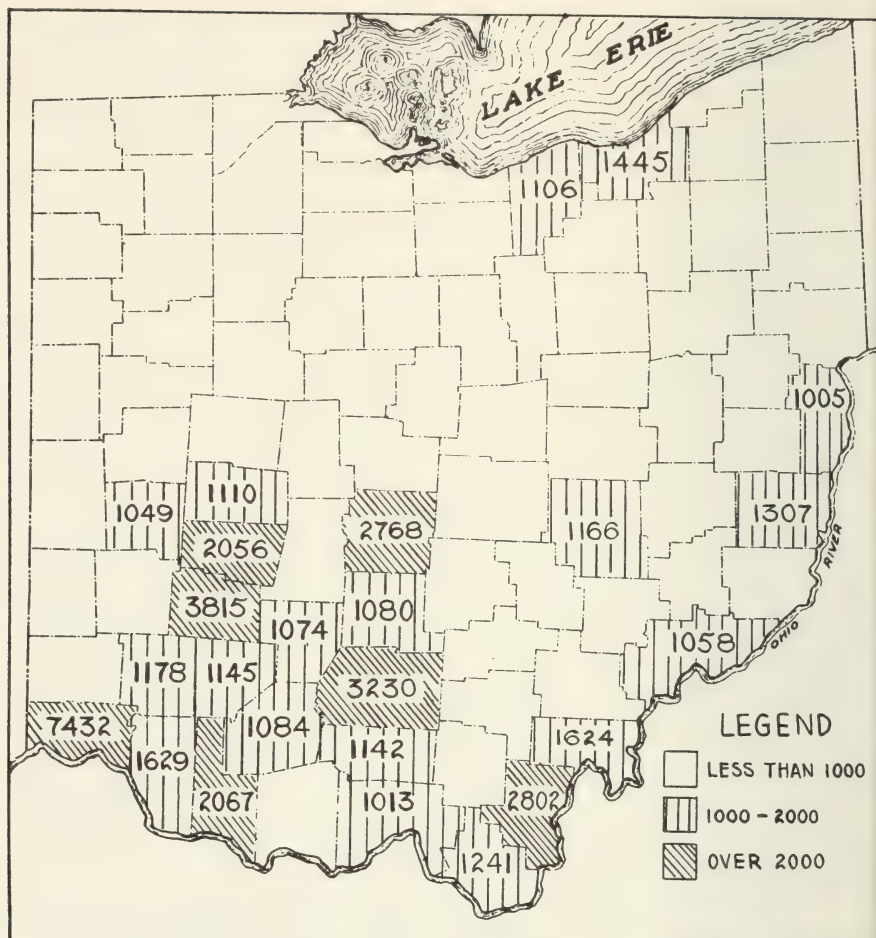
The foreign-born numbered 372,493 in 1870, but 477,322 other Ohioans had one or both parents born abroad. The Germans comprised nearly half of the foreign-born, 182,897 belonging to that racial group. Great Britain and Ireland contributed 140,028 subjects, 82,674 of these coming from Ireland.<sup>7</sup> Other European elements were of minor importance. Italy contributed but 564 of her

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>5</sup> Negro education is discussed in Chapter VII.

<sup>6</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Aug. 4, 1858. See also *Cincinnati Commercial*, Jan. 18, 1860. Its Columbus correspondent reported that many Xenia residents had petitioned the General Assembly to forbid the admission of free Negroes to Ohio.

<sup>7</sup> *Ninth Census, Statistics of Population*, 339-40.



MAP 2. NEGROES IN OHIO, 1870

subjects, Russia 181, Greece 4. Cincinnati had over one-fifth of the State's immigrants living in its confines—79,612 persons in all. Of these 49,448 were Germans, 18,624 Irish.<sup>8</sup> Yet the percentage of foreign-born in the Queen City had declined since 1860, the great migration having come in the 1840's and 1850's.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 386, 389, for statistics by cities.

Cleveland, on the contrary, was attracting so many European immigrants that by 1870, two out of every five persons residing there were of foreign birth. The capital of the Western Reserve was being divested of its peculiar Yankee character. Cleveland and Toledo had larger proportions of foreign-born in their corporate limits than any other Ohio cities. They also enjoyed another unique distinction—they led in percentages of Irish, though in both cities the Germans outnumbered the sons of Erin. Cleveland was one of the important centers of the Fenian movement, an Irish revolutionary organization that hoped to free Ireland from British rule and in the years following the Civil War made plans to invade Canada.<sup>9</sup> A considerable English and Scotch group had come to Cleveland earlier and played a vital part in the business life of the city. Bohemians began to appear by 1870, a forerunner of the later Slavic and East European influx. For example, in June, 1870, 448 immigrants settled in Cleveland. These were divided as follows: Germans 220, Bohemians 112, English 53, Irish 44, Scotch 9, Danes 6, Hollanders 4.<sup>10</sup> A new Bohemian benevolent society was organized in that year to take its place with the Turnverein, the Irish Literary and Benevolent Association, St. George's Benevolent Society (English) and the St. Andrews Society (Scotch).<sup>11</sup>

While immigrants were drawn to the urban centers by opportunities for employment and the presence of others of their own nationalities, native Ohioans in many cases were being attracted to the rich prairies of the new West. The migration to Iowa alone was estimated by the State Commissioner of Statistics at 70,000 persons between 1850 and 1857, and this was but half the total movement from Ohio.<sup>12</sup> The census figures for 1850, 1860 and 1870 are illuminating on this point. Seventeen of Ohio's eighty-eight counties declined in population between 1850 and 1860, while ten of these and eight others also showed losses between 1860 and

<sup>9</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, 1866, numerous references.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, July 2, 1870.

<sup>11</sup> References in *Leader*, 1870, 1871.

<sup>12</sup> Ohio Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1857 (Columbus, 1858), 10.

1870.<sup>13</sup> Most of them were in the older eastern and northeastern parts of the State where wheat and wool had been the staple products. In some cases industry had offset this trend. Summit, Columbiana and Jefferson counties had lost population between 1850 and 1860, and Trumbull had shown only a slight gain, but all four had increased more than ten per cent in the decade of the 1860's as industry and mining developed.

Forty-two counties showed a population growth of ten per cent or more between 1860 and 1870. These lay in four different regions. In the fertile northwest a bloc of farming counties extending from the northern boundary south to Darke County constituted a district of rapid growth, only recently swamp and wilderness. Toledo and Sandusky on the eastern edge were the only cities. Except in these two instances, industrialism had no direct significance. A second group of counties extending in a curve southwestward from Columbus to Cincinnati increased in population chiefly through the growth of the cities of Columbus, Springfield, Dayton, Hamilton and Cincinnati. A third section that was adding to its numbers was the mineral region of the south. Nine counties reaching from Washington to Scioto, five along the Ohio and four adjacent to them, owed their growth to the exploitation of mineral wealth and the coming of the railroad. Portsmouth was the only city of over ten thousand here. The fourth district where the rate of growth was more than ten per cent lay in the northeast, where a second mineral area was being developed and where Cleveland, Akron and Youngstown were becoming industrial cities. The counties concerned were Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark, Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana and Jefferson, though the increase of the last named was barely sufficient to place it ahead of its total of 1850, as it had declined in population between 1850 and 1860.

Since population increases, outside the northwestern counties, were significant only where manufacturing and mining were making headway, these aspects of economic life may be examined first.

<sup>13</sup> *Fourteenth Census of the United States, State Compendium, Ohio* (Washington, 1924), 12-3.



The 1850's were transition years in Ohio's industrial progress.<sup>14</sup> Despite a significant increase in manufacturing in the preceding decades, following the opening of the canal system, the State had remained essentially agricultural with but one industrial city of metropolitan character. Even three of Cincinnati's most characteristic products, pork, whiskey and flour, were more closely related to the farm than to the factory. Distance from the eastern industrial centers and the expense and uncertainty of transportation, even after the canal system was in existence, gave an impetus to manufacturing in Steubenville, Newark, Zanesville, Chillicothe, Dayton and other Ohio Valley towns besides contributing greatly to Cincinnati's position as the "Queen City" of the West. But, except in the last case, these centers manufactured more often for a regional market rather than for export, though this was less true in the case of Ohio River cities. In the Lake Erie section of the State, settled later than the Ohio Valley, a more scattered population and the accessibility of New York and other eastern centers lessened the need for local manufactures and made northern Ohio essentially rural in character.

By 1870, Ohio, though still in fourth place among the States in manufacturing as in 1850, had more than quadrupled its output of industrial products in terms of dollar values. Its mills, workshops and factories employed nearly three times as many workers as in the earlier year.<sup>15</sup> In the manufacture of agricultural implements it led the Nation and was second in most forms of the iron industry.<sup>16</sup> If one judges the importance of Ohio's various industries according to the value of the products in dollars, they ranked as follows:

1. Flouring and grist mill products.
2. Rolled and forged iron.
3. Men's clothing.
4. Agricultural implements.
5. Pig iron.
6. Packed meats.
7. Lumber.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For a survey of industrial progress, 1830-1900, see William F. Gephart, *Transportation and Industrial Development in the Middle West*, *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, XXXIV, No. 1 (1909), 242-65.

<sup>15</sup> *Ninth Census*, III, *The Statistics of the Wealth and Industry of the United States* (Washington, 1872), 392-3.

<sup>16</sup> Tables in *ibid.*, 589, 602 and following.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 557-60.



2. CHARCOAL FURNACES

The leading industrial counties in order of their importance were Hamilton, Cuyahoga, Montgomery, Summit, Stark, Mahoning, Franklin, Butler, Lucas, Trumbull, Erie, Clark, Jefferson, Lawrence and Muskingum.<sup>18</sup> Twenty years earlier Hamilton (containing Cincinnati) was in the lead, as in 1870; Montgomery (containing Dayton) was then in second place but far behind Hamilton; Jefferson (containing Steubenville) was third, followed by Muskingum (containing Zanesville), Summit and Franklin.<sup>19</sup> Of these six counties, only Summit lay in the northern half of the State. Yet by 1870, four of the six counties highest in industrial production were in the north. Cuyahoga, eighteenth in 1850, was second in 1870. The industrial growth of the north was a striking phenomenon of the Civil War era. Cleveland, Toledo, Akron, Canton and Youngstown were emerging as centers of industry to rival the older cities of the south. The railroad and the in-flow of Lake Superior iron ore were powerful factors in the growth of the northeast, while the

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 556-7.

<sup>19</sup> *Seventh Census, 1850, Compendium* (Washington, 1854), 179.



rapid settlement of the northwestern counties contributed to Toledo's wealth and size.

The coal and iron development, the heart of Ohio's industrial progress, was relatively backward prior to 1850. Pomeroy coal was well known all along the Ohio and Mississippi,<sup>20</sup> but wood was still too plentiful in most localities to cause any demand for coal from a distance. The great coal areas of southern and eastern Ohio were almost untouched. Iron ore was known to exist in quantities available for manufacturing in such hill counties as Lawrence, Jackson, Scioto and their neighbors, known as the Hanging Rock region, and in some parts of the northeast, but only a good beginning in smelting iron had been made by 1850.<sup>21</sup> Difficulties of reaching markets, lack of capital, and the competition of English iron had retarded industrial progress heretofore in the regions where natural resources most abounded.

In the ten years preceding the Civil War, however, iron manufacturing and coal production grew by leaps and bounds, despite the set-back of the Panic of 1857. In the Hanging Rock district six counties had furnaces in 1860, while two of these, Lawrence and Jackson, produced half of the State's pig iron.<sup>22</sup> Most of the furnaces in this section used charcoal for smelting, as wood existed in abundance where the iron ore was found. By 1869, forty-five had been built. The great period of furnace building of this type came in the years 1853-1856, only two being erected in the 1860's.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, four coal and coke furnaces began operations in this decade, and others soon followed, as the superiority of this type of smelting manifested itself.

Ohio River towns, especially Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, took most of the iron of the southern counties,<sup>24</sup> for the river was the

<sup>20</sup> Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850*, Carl Wittke, ed., *History of the State of Ohio* (Columbus), III (1941), 76-7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-8.

<sup>22</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report, 1860* (Columbus, 1861), 29.

<sup>23</sup> Wilber Stout, "The Charcoal Iron Industry of the Hanging Rock Iron District," *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* (Columbus), XLII (1933), 74-9, for a tabulation of furnaces. Hereafter this periodical is cited *O. S. A. H. Quar.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-9.

chief outlet at first. Later the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad and the Scioto and Hocking Valley from Portsmouth to Hamden (not to be confused with the later Columbus and Hocking Valley road) provided the furnaces more remote from the river, as in Jackson County, with better transportation facilities and stimulated the development of new furnaces.<sup>25</sup> The earlier Iron Railroad, only thirteen miles long, had served to carry iron from Lawrence County furnaces to the river at Ironton, beginning in 1851.

Not until the Civil War was there any long period of prosperity for the iron producers, but the years from 1861 to 1873 produced a steady stream of profits. Jefferson Furnace in Jackson County paid annual dividends of one hundred per cent or more for a ten-year period, beginning in 1864.<sup>26</sup> In one year, 1866, its stockholders received two hundred per cent on their investment. Not all were as fortunate but red ink was usually an unnecessary article with furnace men until after 1873.

The industrial greatness of the Hanging Rock region, however, was to prove less permanent than that of the Cleveland-Mahoning Valley district. To Cleveland in 1852 came half a dozen barrels of Lake Superior iron ore—two tons in all—shipped by the Marquette Iron Company.<sup>27</sup> Two years later fifteen hundred tons were received, and with the opening of the Sault Sainte Marie Canal around the falls of the St. Mary's River in 1855, the rich ores of the upper lakes poured out in ever-increasing quantities to be landed on the docks of Ohio's lake ports. By 1873 the output was 1,195,234 tons, a large part of it arriving in Cleveland for distribution over the north-eastern counties where coal was most available for smelting. Cleveland had more money invested in Lake Superior ore than had any other city.<sup>28</sup> The developing iron industry of the Mahoning Valley, based on local ore and coal, welcomed the richer Lake Superior product, which soon commanded the market. Coke from the Con-

<sup>25</sup> Vernon David Keeler, "An Economic History of the Jackson County Iron Industry", *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XLII (1933), 164-7.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>27</sup> James Ford Rhodes, "The Coal and Iron Industry of Cleveland," *Magazine of Western History* (Cleveland), II (1885), 341.

<sup>28</sup> The industrial development of Cleveland is discussed later in this chapter.

nellsville (Pa.) region began to displace Mahoning coal for smelting and the foundations of a great industry were firmly established.<sup>29</sup> Youngstown, not yet incorporated as a village when the census of 1850 was taken, had 8,075 people in its limits by 1870,<sup>30</sup> ranking fourteenth among the cities of the State.

The shift from charcoal to coal and coke for the smelting of iron is shown by the production for 1873. Of a total of 406,029 tons of pig iron for that year, only 100,498 tons were charcoal iron, nearly all of it from the Hanging Rock district.<sup>31</sup> The Mahoning Valley was now ahead of the southern counties in total pig iron output.

Ohio had forty-nine rolling mills and steel works in 1877, nearly all built before 1873.<sup>32</sup> Since steel production was still in its infancy, most of these were turning out iron rails and bar, sheet and plate iron. Cleveland and Youngstown were the leading cities in this respect. Foundries, machine-shops and other establishments for the manufacture of finished iron products were not so localized. Cincinnati was foremost in this field.

Coal mining was a relatively new industry in Ohio in 1850. Centering at first in Meigs County on the Ohio River and in the Mahoning Valley with its canal outlet at Cleveland, it expanded with the railroad network until by 1857 production was six times what it had been seven years earlier.<sup>33</sup> By 1870 the coal receipts of Cleveland were over ten times the total of 1850.<sup>34</sup> The leading coal counties were Trumbull, Meigs, Jefferson, Columbiana, Stark, Athens and Belmont. Five of these lay in the eastern and northeastern parts of the State. Meigs, on the Ohio River, the early leader in coal output, was second by 1870. The Hocking Valley was beginning to develop its coal resources but only Athens County as yet ranked among the leaders.

While coal and iron held the center of the industrial stage, in

<sup>29</sup> Joseph G. Butler, *History of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley* (Chicago 1921), I, 181-2, 767-71.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 192, 202-3.

<sup>31</sup> Ohio Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report, 1877* (Columbus, 1878), 44.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-5.

<sup>33</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report, 1857*, 33-4.

<sup>34</sup> Secretary of State, *Statistical Report, 1871*, 64.

the wings lurked a newcomer destined presently to share the spotlight with them. This was petroleum, popularly termed "coal oil," when refined. The existence of oil near the surface had been known for many years from the oily film that appeared on springs and streams in several places. It was also encountered by well diggers and by salt producers who found oil and gas a nuisance when drilling for brine. Dr. S. P. Hildreth in a letter written to Caleb Atwater in 1819 and published in the *American Journal of Science* in 1826 told of a salt well near Marietta which discharged "vast quantities of petroleum, or, as it is vulgarly called, 'Seneca oil'." He asserted that it afforded considerable profit and was in demand for lamps in workshops and manufactories. "It affords a clear light, when burnt in this way, and will be a valuable article for lighting the street lamps in the future cities of Ohio."<sup>35</sup> Many years were to pass before his prophecy was realized.

From Marietta, Seneca oil, obtained from West Virginia, was shipped to New York by way of New Orleans in 1843 by the firm of Bosworth and Wells.<sup>36</sup> A drug house in New York bought it at ninety cents a gallon. For a number of years it was shipped to various places at thirty-three to forty cents a gallon, the makers of "Mexican Mustang" and "Nerve and Bone" liniments using much of it. In Meigs County at Pomeroy in 1852 oil poured out of a salt well in such quantities that it overflowed into the Ohio River. Nearly a hundred barrels were shipped to St. Louis where it was sold as a liniment.<sup>37</sup>

The limited quantities of petroleum discovered before 1859 precluded its general use as an illuminant and led to attempts to manufacture "coal oil" from coal or shale. In the late 1850's some fifty or sixty establishments were engaged in the business, twenty-five of them in Ohio.<sup>38</sup> In the Mahoning Valley four companies were distilling oil from cannel coal and selling it at fifty to sixty cents a

<sup>35</sup> *American Journal of Science* (New Haven), X (1826), 1-8.

<sup>36</sup> Ohio Geological Survey, *Report*, VI, *Economic Geology* (Columbus, 1888), 443; Ohio Geological Survey, *Fourth Series, Bulletin*, No. 1 (Columbus, 1903), 148.

<sup>37</sup> Ohio Geological Survey, *Bulletin*, No. 1, 152.

<sup>38</sup> Allen Nevins, *John D. Rockefeller* (New York, 1941), I, 152.



gallon.<sup>39</sup> Cleveland had perhaps four manufacturers of oil, as did the Cincinnati area.<sup>40</sup> A lamp filled with the new fluid would burn all evening at a cost of two cents, compared with five cents for lard oil, according to one observer, and the light was much brighter. Only quantity production was needed to bring about a revolution in the lighting system of the American home. However, manufactured coal oil was not destined to accomplish this result, for in 1859, in northwestern Pennsylvania, Colonel Edwin L. Drake proved that oil could be pumped from the ground in vast quantities by the simple process of drilling down to it. Ohioans quickly followed this lead, and drilling was soon under way in several places.

In 1859, Dr. J. S. Newberry, State geologist, contributed to the annual report of the Ohio State Board of Agriculture an article entitled, "The Rock Oils of Ohio."<sup>41</sup> In this he explained the refining and uses of petroleum. He reported that some two hundred wells were being bored at Mecca, Trumbull County, Ohio, one at Lowellville, Mahoning County, and that attempts at two or three other places had met with little success as yet.

To Mecca Township, Trumbull County, goes the honor of having the first producing oil wells in Ohio. The firm of Bonnell, Woods and Jordan drilled the first well on the farm of William H. Jeffries.<sup>42</sup> Other wells followed and oil was found at depths ranging from thirty to sixty feet. Crude drills, operated by hand, were first used. An "oil dorado" was under way at Mecca, according to a correspondent of the *Cleveland Leader*. The three hotels were crowded, four lines of hacks were operating between Warren and Mecca, the roads were alive with teams of horses hauling oil and supplies, and new buildings were springing up everywhere. The average daily yield per well was twenty barrels, which, at ten dollars

<sup>39</sup> Butler, *History of Youngstown*, I, 772.

<sup>40</sup> Nevins, *Rockefeller*, I, 153; Charles Cist, *Cincinnati in 1859* (Cincinnati, 1859), 310.

<sup>41</sup> Pp. 605-18.

<sup>42</sup> Butler, *History of Youngstown*, I, 772-3; Ohio Geological Survey, *Report*, VI, 328-9.

a barrel, yielded "a magnificent fortune to its possessor."<sup>43</sup> The boom soon collapsed, as the field did not produce heavily. The oil was of excellent quality and was long in demand as a lubricant, commanding higher market prices than any other natural oil.<sup>44</sup>

The Macksburg field in Washington County proved to be more important than the Mecca area. After the Pennsylvania discoveries of 1859, drilling was begun on Duck Creek, half a mile below Macksburg, and oil was found at a depth of fifty-nine feet. Several other wells were opened in the neighborhood and a wild boom resulted by 1864, one farm of two hundred acres selling for \$300,000. The fever soon subsided as production declined, transportation proved expensive and oil was falling in price. The Macksburg field was revived in the later 1870's, however. Beginning in 1861, Cow Run in Lawrence Township, also enjoyed an oil spree, followed by a decline, and then a second boom in 1866 when a well drilled six hundred feet gushed out one hundred barrels a day.<sup>45</sup>

Morgan County was also a pioneer in oil production, Homer Township being the scene of the first attempts in 1860-1861.<sup>46</sup> Twenty-five wells were being drilled in the summer of 1861. Some were good producers, but the field was not exploited to any extent until the 1890's. In Noble County near Caldwell several wells were drilled about 1860 with moderate success.<sup>47</sup>

Gas was not used to any extent commercially though known to exist in a number of places. "Carbonated hydrogen gas" was reported in Washington County by Dr. S. P. Hildreth in 1819, in the letter to Caleb Atwater cited earlier.<sup>48</sup> It poured from a salt well along with petroleum, forcing out the salt water with "tremendous explosions." Gas seeped from the ground at Findlay, Hancock County, and as early as 1838 was burned in a residence.<sup>49</sup> The great Findlay field was not really discovered, however, until the 1880's.

<sup>43</sup> March 1, 1861.

<sup>44</sup> Ohio Geological Survey, *Report*, VI, 329.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 443-55.

<sup>46</sup> Ohio Geological Survey, *Bulletin*, No. 1, 126-8.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>48</sup> *American Journal of Science*, X, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Ohio Geological Survey, *Bulletin*, No. 1, 32.



In Vinton County, gas found in an oil well in 1867 was set on fire and produced a flame 75 to 200 feet high for several years.<sup>50</sup> In Columbiana County a gas well was apparently drilled near East Liverpool in 1859 but the results were unsatisfactory.<sup>51</sup> Gas found in drilling salt wells was used to produce salt and for light and fuel for several houses near the salt works at Wellsville in 1862. It was also burned in several houses, a store or two and a pottery at East Liverpool.<sup>52</sup> Not until 1874 was it used for street lights and in homes.<sup>53</sup>

Neither crude oil nor gas production, however, contributed greatly to Ohio's economic development prior to the 1880's. Census statistics in 1870 placed production of oil at 2,038,543 gallons and listed but four counties, Washington, Morgan, Columbiana and Noble, as oil producers. Ohio was a poor third to Pennsylvania and West Virginia.<sup>54</sup> The total value of its petroleum, 1860-1884, was estimated at \$579,223, an insignificant amount.<sup>55</sup> Production down to 1876 was put at 200,000 barrels. By 1888 it was over ten million barrels a year.<sup>56</sup> Yet Ohio held the leadership in the refining of oil by 1870, and Cleveland had become the oil capital of the Nation.

Pittsburgh, nearest large city to the rich Pennsylvania oil fields, at first forged ahead in the refining business, but Cleveland gained in the late 1860's and by the close of the decade was in first place. Two competing railroad systems, the Erie, which had absorbed the Atlantic and Great Western, and the New York Central-Lake Shore system gave the city access to the oil regions and furnished two competing lines to the seaboard.<sup>57</sup> Pittsburgh meanwhile was dependent on the Pennsylvania road alone and was being eco-

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>52</sup> Ohio Geological Survey, *Report*, III (Columbus, 1878), *Geology and Paleontology*, Part I, 116-8.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, *Report*, VI, 334.

<sup>54</sup> *Ninth Census of the United States*, III, 769, 783-4.

<sup>55</sup> Ohio Geological Survey, *Bulletin*, No. 1, 32.

<sup>56</sup> United States Geological Survey, *Twenty-first Annual Report*, Part VI (cont.), *Mineral Resources of the United States, 1899* (Washington, 1900), 95.

<sup>57</sup> Nevins, *Rockefeller*, I, 180-1, 212-5, 254-5, 282-8, discusses the influence of transportation on refining.

nomically strangled by its rates. Cleveland also had an alternative water route to the seaboard and could ship directly to England by the Lakes, the Welland Canal and the St. Lawrence. Besides transportation advantages, it also had capital and labor available, was near the Mahoning Valley coal fields, and was nearer to the western markets than Pittsburgh or the eastern oil-refining cities. These factors, plus the business skill of John D. Rockefeller and his associates, made Cleveland the oil refining center of the Nation. By 1871 the *New York Commercial Bulletin* was complaining that the Ohio city was fixing the prices of oil for all the refining centers.<sup>58</sup> A great new business had been established.

Two older businesses, also based on products of the soil, were not making as rapid progress as oil refining. One of them, the salt industry, was to lose much of its early importance. After rising to third place among the states in salt production in the 1860's, Ohio had to encounter the competition of Michigan, a new producer, and New York and West Virginia, old rivals; hence the industry entered upon a decline.<sup>59</sup> The clay industry fared better. Pottery manufacturing was centered around East Liverpool where yellow and Rockingham ware constituted the most important product in the 1850's. White ware was not made until 1860 and did not become well established until 1872.<sup>60</sup> In general, the industry was in bad straits when the Civil War came, but boomed after 1861 when war demands and tariff protection provided a great stimulus. Machinery was displacing hand labor in the 1860's and reducing the employer's dependence on skilled workmen.<sup>61</sup> Sewer pipe was first made at Akron in the early 1850's but the district from Steubenville to East Liverpool later became an important rival.<sup>62</sup> Akron was also a center for stoneware.<sup>63</sup> The production of fire-brick, first manufactured in 1841, was on a small scale until after 1860. Then the

<sup>58</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, Jan. 14, 1871.

<sup>59</sup> Ohio Geological Survey, *Report*, VI, 658-60; *Ninth Census*, III, 622.

<sup>60</sup> Wilber Stout, "History of the Clay Industry in Ohio," Ohio Geological Survey, Fourth Series, *Bulletin*, No. 26 (Columbus, 1923), 16-20, 63-4, 74-81.

<sup>61</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1877, 235-6.

<sup>62</sup> Stout, "Clay Industry," 36-8.

<sup>63</sup> *A Centennial History of Akron, 1825-1925* (Akron, 1925), 303-12.

industry developed rapidly around Sciotoville, Scioto County, and soon spread to many other places.<sup>64</sup> By the census figures of 1870 on brick and tile, Ohio ranked fifth in the production of fire-brick, seventh in common brick, and first in the other products of this group including tile and drain pipe.<sup>65</sup>

Yet Ohio's industrial progress was much more than the expansion of the mineral industries. Manufacturing developed along almost every line as evidenced by the rapid growth of many cities. A few examples will reveal the character of this transformation.

Cincinnati continued to hold its leadership as the great industrial center of the State. Its statistician, Charles Cist, in his *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1859*, estimated the total value of its industrial output at \$112,254,400.<sup>66</sup> This was more than double his estimate for 1851 and was probably far too high. Yet his book presents a clear picture of the city's industrial growth. Among its manufactured products, clothing easily took first rank followed by foundry castings, packed pork and beef, candles and lard oil, whiskey, butchering products, iron (bar, boiler and sheet iron, and nails), domestic liquors and furniture. Cincinnatians were engaged in manufacturing such diverse products as billiard tables, fire engines, mineral waters, trusses, wigs and almost every other item human wants required. One of its unique products was iron jails, made on order in sections, which were first assembled by the maker, then taken apart and shipped to their destination, where they could easily be put together again. One satisfied client wrote to a company that its jail, "for safety, convenience and comfort," was not excelled in the West. "It gives good satisfaction to the people of the county, and is a terror to evil doers."<sup>67</sup>

More important to the city's industrial future were its manufactures of candles, lard oil, tallow oil, soap and glycerine, produced by twenty-five establishments. They constituted a major industry by 1859, and producers were already importing from various places

<sup>64</sup> Stout, "Clay Industry," 31-3.

<sup>65</sup> *Ninth Census*, III, 592.

<sup>66</sup> Pp. 341-4. The census figures for the whole State in 1860 were \$121,691,148.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

much of the tallow and lard they consumed. The company started by William Procter and James Gamble in 1837 was characterized by Cist as "probably engaged more extensively in manufacturing operations, than any other establishment in our city." It had eighty employees and its sales exceeded one million dollars.<sup>68</sup> The owners announced with pride that their candles were always "full sixteen ounces to the pound" and warned the public that most "Star and Adamantine Candles" on the market were deficient in weight. Their advertisement carefully explained the difference between "sevens" and "short weight sixes" and computed the loss to the consumer in buying the latter.<sup>69</sup> Within a few years soap displaced candles as the major interest of the firm of Procter and Gamble, and by 1875 it had sixteen buildings and employed 267 persons.<sup>70</sup>

A partial survey of Cincinnati's industries by its business men in 1860 put its annual production at a modest \$56,500,000 but the report was incomplete. The Cincinnati *Commercial* placed the total value of its manufactured goods at \$75,000,000, and claimed industrial leadership over other American cities in pork packing, whiskey, furniture, wine, and steam fire-engines. It ranked the Queen City third in manufacturing. Only Philadelphia could offer as low a cost of living to its residents, according to the *Commercial*.<sup>71</sup>

Cincinnati's economic overlords of the West had reached its zenith at mid-century. As population flowed westward and the center of grain production shifted to the prairies, St. Louis and rapidly growing Chicago became the marketing centers of the new West. Cincinnati's economic sphere was thus restricted more and more. Contributory to this change were the spreading railroad tentacles of the 1850's. Far-sighted observers were warning the Queen City at the beginning of the decade that her throne was in danger unless she showed a greater interest in railroad building.<sup>72</sup> The east-and-west roads then surveyed or in progress would pass to the north of Cincinnati leaving her still dependent on the Ohio

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 266. Its history is summarized in Cincinnati Federal Writers' Project, *They Built a City* (Cincinnati, 1938), 102-13.

<sup>69</sup> Cist, *Cincinnati in 1859*, page advertisement in back of book.

<sup>70</sup> D. J. Kenny, *Illustrated Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, 1875), 253-4.

<sup>71</sup> Apr. 17, 1860.

<sup>72</sup> Cincinnati *Gazette*, May 8, June 14, 1850.



River. Either because her business men did not comprehend the situation or, more likely, because the better routes lay to the north, Ohio's metropolis found, in 1860, that the dire prophecies of ten years before were in danger of being realized. The census figure of 161,044 showed a far smaller population than had been expected and placed Cincinnati barely ahead of St. Louis. The Cincinnati *Commercial* frankly admitted that "we cannot expect to remain an exchange point between the East and the West," but it did claim a right to that position between the "Central South and the North."<sup>73</sup> This, indeed, seemed so logical that the city's business interests began to plan railroad connections with Nashville, Knoxville, Memphis, Chattanooga and Atlanta, and committees representing various southern cities and their railway projects visited Cincinnati in the fall of 1860 to confer with the latter's capitalists and merchants.<sup>74</sup> Southern trade had never appeared more necessary to Cincinnati's progress than in the months of 1860-1861 when the dark clouds of disunion were hanging over the country. When the break came, all possibility of railway connections with the South vanished not to reappear for many years.<sup>75</sup>

The Civil War brought a war prosperity as a partial recompense for the loss of southern business, and the population by 1870 had reached 216,239. This was an increase of 34.3 per cent over the total for 1860, yet it was the smallest percentage of increase of any of the State's ten largest cities, Zanesville excepted.<sup>76</sup> Cincinnati now ranked eighth among American cities. It remained the metropolis of both the State and the Ohio Valley, and if it was no longer "Porkopolis," it was not surpassed by any other American city in the diversity of its industrial interests. Its manufacturing establishments gave employment to 59,827 persons in 1870, over twice the total for 1850.<sup>77</sup> It was not a product of the age of iron and steel and its economic coat was one of many colors. Its days of rapid

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, special supplement, Sept. 13, 1860.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 12, 14, 15, 18, Nov. 4, 1860.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter IV, The Revolution in Transportation.

<sup>76</sup> *Fourteenth Census, State Compendium, Ohio*, 8. The tables of Ohio cities by decades are used in later pages of this chapter.

<sup>77</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report, 1878*, 314, giving figures of Cincinnati Board of Trade for earlier years.

growth were ended but it was better prepared to face depression and adversity. A steady progress was to be Cincinnati's portion in the years to come.

Besides Cincinnati, the southwest could boast of Dayton, Springfield and Hamilton, respectively fifth, seventh and eighth in population in the State in 1870. The latter two, though growing rapidly, were little more than a third the size of Dayton with its 30,473 inhabitants. Located in a rich farming section and enjoying good rail facilities, the prosperity of all three rested on solid foundations, though only Dayton was to achieve metropolitan status in the Miami Valley. That city had almost trebled its population in two decades and industrially ranked above both Toledo and Columbus. Montgomery County, including Dayton, was third in the State in the value of its manufactured goods.<sup>78</sup>

Cleveland in 1870 was fired with metropolitan ambitions. In 1850 the Forest City was scarcely more than the capital and commercial center of the New England Western Reserve, a prosperous farming and dairy region. At that time it enjoyed lake and canal outlets, but its ten miles of railroad meant little to its economic life.<sup>79</sup> Its population of 17,034 at mid-century was slightly under that of Columbus. By 1860 it had grown to 43,417 inhabitants, a gain of 154.9 per cent, and was a bustling railroad center, having connections with important eastern cities and with Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis in the West. Much of the business of the Middle West passed through it. The completion of the Sault Sainte Marie Canal in 1855 brought the rich iron ore of Lake Superior to the docks of Cleveland whence it was shipped to the Mahoning Valley and the Pittsburgh region to meet the coal of Pennsylvania and Ohio. As late as 1860 the *Cleveland Leader* was complaining that the city's wealth was still invested in real estate, banks and commerce, and that rich Lake Superior ore passed through the city to be smelted elsewhere.<sup>80</sup> Cleveland was twenty-first among the

<sup>78</sup> *Ninth Census*, III, 556-77, gives industrial statistics for Ohio.

<sup>79</sup> *Cleveland Herald*, Jan. 18, 1850.

<sup>80</sup> May 18, June 5, 9, July 9, 1860.



cities of the Nation in population but only thirty-fourth in manufacturing.

By 1870 Cleveland had a population more than twice that of 1860, and its industrial interests rivalled its commerce. The first report of the city's board of trade in 1866 told of blast furnaces, rolling mills and forges with a capital of \$3,000,000 and employing 3,000 men. Wrought iron sales amounted to more than \$6,000,000. Its thirty oil refineries turned out a product valued at \$4,500,000 on a capital of \$1,500,000. Cleveland was also the leading ship-building port on the Great Lakes.<sup>81</sup> Small wonder that its population had leaped to 92,829 to place it fifteenth among American cities. It was nearly three times as large as Toledo, the third Ohio city in size.

Among its early iron masters were Henry Chisholm, William A. and Charles A. Otis, J. M. Ford, W. J. Gordon and Samuel L. Mather.<sup>82</sup> The first named, born in Scotland, as were many early Clevelanders, founded what became the Cleveland Rolling Mill Company and was a pioneer in the production and adaptation of Bessemer steel to various uses. Engaged chiefly in the buying and selling of coal and iron ore and in lake transportation was Rhodes and Company, founded by Daniel P. Rhodes but including among its partners by 1870 a rising young business man, Marcus Alonzo Hanna, Rhodes's son-in-law.<sup>83</sup> His career was to epitomize the evolution of his city into a metropolis.

Another keen master of capital who, unlike Hanna, was not diverted into politics, was John D. Rockefeller, the shrewd, far-sighted founder of the Standard Oil Company. A commission merchant when still under twenty, this New York-born son of an itinerant salesman of patent medicines went into the oil refining business with several partners in 1863, bought out his associates and formed a new partnership with Samuel Andrews in 1865, and soon became the leading figure among Cleveland's oil refiners.

<sup>81</sup> Elroy McKendree Avery, *A History of Cleveland and Its Environs* (Chicago and New York, 1918), I, 247-9.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 691, 693-7.

<sup>83</sup> Herbert Croly, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna* (New York, 1912), 54-64.

Henry M. Flagler became a partner in 1867. The firm, by a combination of sheer efficiency, adequate capital, railroad rebates, Rockefeller's imagination and rare mastery of detail, and some sharp practices emerged in a fiercely competitive and speculative business as the largest oil refiners in the world. On January 10, 1870, the Standard Oil Company of Ohio was incorporated.<sup>84</sup> Thereafter the chronicle of this great corporation becomes a part of the Nation's history.

At neighboring Akron, a booming little municipality just past the ten-thousand mark in population, Dr. Benjamin F. Goodrich, a Civil War surgeon from New York, inaugurated the great rubber industry in 1870 in a small brick building on the banks of the canal. Nineteen business men headed by Col. George T. Perkins supplied one thousand dollars each. The first product was "White Anchor" fire hose.<sup>85</sup> A local historian, listing the industries of Akron for the year 1874, mentioned two woolen mills, two paper mills, seven flouring mills, four foundries, a rolling mill, a blast furnace, two manufactories of reapers and mowers, ten of stoneware, one of pearl barley, one of oatmeal and far down in the list, a solitary rubber factory.<sup>86</sup> For many years Akron was better known for its mowers and reapers, its oatmeal, its stone pottery and its sewer pipe than for its rubber. The beginnings of an important cereal industry were due to the introduction of oatmeal, first cut in cubes, by Ferdinand Schumacher, a German grocer, about the year 1854. He sold his product by the ounce in glass candy jars. Hours of cooking were necessary to make it palatable. Later he built the "German Mills" which turned out cereal products.<sup>87</sup> This was an ancestor of the Quaker Oats Company of a later period.

Toledo, third among Ohio's cities in 1870, boasted a population of 31,584, slightly more than Columbus and Dayton, its close rivals. More remarkable was its rate of growth, for in 1850 its population was hardly more than that of a village, 3,829 souls.

<sup>84</sup> Nevins, *Rockefeller*, I, *passim*.

<sup>85</sup> *A Centennial History of Akron, 1825-1925*, 315-6.

<sup>86</sup> William Henry Perrin, *History of Summit County* (Chicago, 1881), 345.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 349; *Centennial History*, 296.

Among the larger municipalities none had shown such an increase. The completion of the Miami and Erie Canal in 1845, the settlement of the northwestern counties, the advent of the railroad and Toledo's excellent lake outlet made the city the metropolis of northwestern Ohio and of a large section of Indiana. Real and personal property valuations amounted to \$895,402 in 1850; by 1872 they had reached \$16,518,850.<sup>88</sup> While this might be discounted somewhat because of currency inflation, the fact that grain receipts nearly doubled between 1861 and 1871 is evidence of Toledo's expanding commerce. It had become one of the great grain markets of the Nation. The Civil War stimulated industrial development. The output of its establishments in 1870 was almost three times as great as in 1860, and the number of hands employed almost doubled.<sup>89</sup> Toledo citizens found one drawback to industrial expansion—the lack of a rail connection with the coal of southeastern Ohio. This was overcome in the 1870's by the virtual extension of the Hocking Valley road from Columbus to Toledo through the construction of the Columbus and Toledo line.<sup>90</sup>

Sandusky, in 1870 the State's sixth largest urban center, had shared in the expansion of industry and trade that had added to the population of the cities of the North. Yet its increase of nearly fifty-five per cent in the Civil War decade was less than half that of its rival lake ports, Cleveland and Toledo. Lacking canal facilities, it had overcome this handicap by a rail connection with Cincinnati and Springfield in 1848, the first line between the Ohio River and Lake Erie. Soon afterward another road reached down into central Ohio at Newark by way of Mansfield. However, Cleveland and Toledo were presently enjoying equally good railroad facilities and were better located for the rail-and-water carriage of freight. Toledo also had a larger tributary hinterland and Cleveland was nearer the coal beds of eastern Ohio and Pennsylvania. Sandusky, conse-

<sup>88</sup> *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Toledo, South Toledo and Perrysburg* (no place, 1882), 698.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 700; Charles Sumner Van Tassel, *Story of the Maumee Valley, Toledo and the Sandusky Region* (Chicago, 1929), II, 1369.

<sup>90</sup> *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Toledo*, 695; Alfred E. Lee, *History of the City of Columbus* (New York and Chicago, 1892), II, 290-2.

quently, was outdistanced by its two great competitors. However, it had two important industries that gave it a unique position among Ohio cities. These were the curing of fish caught in Lake Erie and the manufacture of wine from the grapes grown along the lake shores.<sup>91</sup>

Columbus, despite its central location and good rail connections, showed little industrial progress down to 1860. The absence of railroads to the coal and iron areas of the south and southeast and the preoccupation of residents of the capital city with politics and officeholding rather than business seemed to account for its industrial tardiness.

The Civil War made the capital the nerve center of the State and a war-time boom gave its economic life an impetus that carried over into the post-war years. Somewhat tardily its business men began to capitalize on the excellent transportation afforded by its railroads, and many new industries were projected and old ones enlarged, including furniture factories, tanneries, machine shops, a saw-making establishment, a rolling mill, a blast furnace and a sewer pipe factory.<sup>92</sup> A spur to the coal and iron business was the building of the Columbus and Hocking Valley Railroad which gave the capital city access to the mineral wealth of the Hocking hills. First projected in the early 1850's, it encountered various obstacles and nothing was done until after the war. Opened to Lancaster in 1869 and to Athens the following year, it was both a profitable venture for its sponsors and a great stimulus to the growth of Columbus and to the development of the Hocking Valley.<sup>93</sup>

Zanesville, Newark, Steubenville, Lancaster and Chillicothe, important Ohio Valley centers in the early history of the State, were affected but little by the new industrialism. In 1870, of the cities mentioned, only Zanesville was among the ten largest in the State and it held last place. In 1830 it had ranked second, and Steubenville had been third. The migrations to the newer western states,

<sup>91</sup> *Ninth Census*, III, 713, Erie County statistics.

<sup>92</sup> Lee, *Columbus*, II, 315-37.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 273-8.



the stagnation of agriculture in some of the older counties, and the greater accessibility of newer centers to raw materials and markets were retarding factors. The period of rapid growth of these older cities had come in the pre-railroad era when virgin soil was being exploited, when southern Ohio was receiving a large immigration and much capital from the East, and when canal and steamboat were stimulating the economic life of the State. Their progress, consequently, had reflected these conditions. Akron, Canton, Youngstown and other young rivals were now outstripping them or would shortly.

In the field of politics the new industrial interests, with one exception, played as yet a minor role. Unlike banking and railroad corporations, they did not incur public distrust, for they sought no governmental assistance nor were their practices of a sort that seemed to require governmental regulation. The prevalence of numerous partnerships and little corporations competing with one another seemed the best guaranty that the public interest would not suffer from economic oppression. Both manufacturer and farmer agreed on a policy of *laissez-faire*. Few were the occasions when legislation seemed necessary. When, under the new Constitution of 1851, the legislature enacted a corporation code providing for unlimited liability for stockholders, it became speedily apparent that few corporations would be organized under it. Whereupon the next assembly changed the provision to a double liability one.<sup>94</sup> In 1860 a bill was brought up in the assembly, backed by certain Youngstown business interests, which would have seriously interfered with the right of laborers to strike. The protests of the working classes proved effective, however, and the bill was defeated.<sup>95</sup> This is one clear instance of an attempt of certain industrial interests to influence legislation. In general, however, their attitude was a "hands off" one.

The one branch of manufacturing that sought governmental favor was the iron interest. The competition of British iron with

<sup>94</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>95</sup> This is dealt with in another part of this chapter.



the expanding American industry was keenly felt and the preference of most railways for English rails was deeply resented. After the Panic of 1857 the general stagnation of the iron trade made favorable tariff legislation a matter of growing importance and Congress was importuned to act. Although the Republican party in Ohio took no official stand, certain leaders, like Thomas Corwin, with old Whig tariff traditions, began to advocate a protective tariff policy.<sup>96</sup> Even Salmon P. Chase veered from his earlier free trade position and attempted to conciliate the Pennsylvania iron interests with a cautious approval of their demands. Presidential ambitions account for his shift. In southern Ohio the iron manufacturers of Ohio and Kentucky held a convention at Portsmouth in February, 1860, to memorialize Congress for a specific duty on foreign iron. They criticised the use of English iron in four Ohio Valley railways and pointed to the tariff of 1842 as an example of the legislation needed.<sup>97</sup> Such sentiments were general in the iron counties, Representative Carey A. Trimble of the Scioto Valley district reporting that petitions were coming in from Scioto, Lawrence and Jackson counties at the rate of five a day asking Congress for a protective tariff on iron.<sup>98</sup>

The rather vague tariff plank in the Republican national platform of 1860 proved satisfactory to the iron masters and they supported Lincoln. In the two southern Ohio districts in the mineral section the rival congressional candidates debated the tariff question almost to the exclusion of everything else, each side trying to show its devotion to the protective principle.<sup>99</sup> The Republicans were more successful with their appeal and carried both districts at the October election, though their opponents charged that pressure had been used by the "Pig-Metal Aristocracy" and some of the coal dealers on their employees to the injury of the Democrats.<sup>100</sup> At the November election Lincoln swept the iron region where furnace

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter XII.

<sup>97</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Feb. 9, 1860.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 29, 1860.

<sup>99</sup> *Athens Messenger*, Aug.-Oct., 1860.

<sup>100</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Oct. 17, 1860.

owners were reported to be passing out Republican ballots to their workmen.<sup>101</sup> This was a conservative area on the slavery issue but the tariff made it safely Republican.

No other industrial interest showed any real concern over the tariff question. Probably the Cincinnati *Commercial* spoke the views of most business and industrial leaders when it declared for an unrestricted operation of natural economic laws even to a policy of free trade and direct taxation.<sup>102</sup> Laissez-faire was a two-edged sword but the business world of the 1850's, unlike its modern counterpart, seemed willing to accept its full implications. A freely competitive system of small-scale businesses was regarded as normal and restriction or stimulation as unnatural. The prosperity of the forties and fifties under low tariffs had effectively answered the proponents of Clay's "American System" and the mystic spell of modern Protectionism was not to envelop the manufacturing classes until industrialism had made greater headway. Nevertheless it is doubtless true that, though making few positive demands on government, the new industrial element exerted a conservative influence in politics. The anti-bank radicalism of the forties and early fifties had disappeared not only because slavery had displaced it in importance but also because the atmosphere of the closing years of the decade was unfavorable to its existence.<sup>103</sup> Agrarian radicalism had lost its appeal. The solid business classes were in a position to make their influence felt and the political parties did not need to be informed of this fact.

The iron interests, satisfied with the high Civil War tariffs, raised no clamor for revision in the later 1860's. Indeed, by 1870 they were on the defensive. Protection was none too popular in Republican ranks, the absence of tariff planks in State platforms being a significant indication of the situation. When the tariff was mentioned in 1870, the plank was so cautiously phrased that a low tariff advocate could hardly have taken exception to it. This continued to be

<sup>101</sup> *Lawrence County Clipper* in *ibid.*, Nov. 11, 1860.

<sup>102</sup> Feb. 3, 14, 20, Mar. 13, 15, 1860.

<sup>103</sup> See Chapter V.

the party's position for many years, in brief, a revenue tariff with incidental protection. The orthodox Republican Cincinnati *Gazette* lifted its voice against protection, joining the more independent *Commercial* in attacking the iron interests.<sup>104</sup>

The organized iron manufacturers of the Hanging Rock region fought against a proposed reduction of pig iron duties in 1869, declaring that it would depress wages since nine-tenths of the cost of producing pig iron was labor.<sup>105</sup> A few months later they reiterated their belief that labor was the chief beneficiary from the tariff and insisted that wage reductions would come if protection were not maintained.<sup>106</sup> They favored the protective principle without reference to the revenue needs of the country, a viewpoint that few Ohioans would have indorsed.

One of the most significant phases of Ohio's transition into an industrial State in the 1850's is the appearance of labor organizations. Confined chiefly to Cincinnati and Cleveland and usually of a temporary character, the unions of the early part of the decade are more important as a manifestation of labor consciousness than for permanent accomplishments. By 1860, however, the labor movement was beginning to develop along modern lines and exhibited an economic strength and a solidarity lacking hitherto. For labor the modern era had definitely begun even before the industrial stimulus of the Civil War had made itself felt.

In 1850 at Cincinnati the idealism of the forties was still the dominant note of the working classes. Labor was striving not merely for better wages and shorter hours but for the uplift of humanity through the reorganization and transformation of the existing social order. The appearance of a labor newspaper, the *Nonpareil*, as an expression of this viewpoint, is not without significance. Operated by an association of printers, it advocated a broadly radical program with emphasis upon a free homestead policy for the public lands, the elimination of landlordism through land restriction laws

<sup>104</sup> Nov. 5, 15, Dec. 27, 1869.

<sup>105</sup> Portsmouth *Times*, in Cincinnati *Commercial*, Jan. 3, 1870.

<sup>106</sup> *Commercial*, Oct. 26, 1870.

and cooperative experiments in industry.<sup>107</sup> The workers were to achieve justice by becoming independent farmers or by owning and operating their particular establishments. Lucius A. Hine, professional reformer, toured the State on behalf of land reform and wrote of his experiences in the *Nonpareil*. The ideals of Robert Owen and Horace Greeley, not those of Samuel Gompers, were dominant. The *Nonpareil* was interested in European radical movements, letters from a Paris correspondent at one time supplying news of developments abroad.<sup>108</sup> Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, was extravagantly praised and the Roman Catholic Church attacked for its hostility toward the great Magyar, and because of papal friendliness to absolutism in Europe.<sup>109</sup> The *Nonpareil* was anti-militaristic in tone and democratic to the point of advocating the submission of all laws to popular vote.<sup>110</sup>

What effect this working class radicalism had upon later movements is not easy to determine. Judged by immediate results its influence seems slight. After an existence of some three years, the *Nonpareil* expired, though Senator Salmon P. Chase, if funds had been available, would gladly have made it an antislavery organ without abandoning its reformist stand on other questions.<sup>111</sup> The free homestead idea had already become a tenet of the Democratic party in the Northwest and presently was taken up by the new Republican party because of its value as an antislavery weapon and its popularity with Westerners and immigrants. It contributed to the later success of the Republicans at Cincinnati where the working classes, the Germans in particular, came to the party's support in large numbers. Probably the *Nonpareil* had helped in a measure to prepare the ground for this result. It doubtless aroused a labor consciousness among certain elements of the Cincinnati working classes, but how much this led to organization and positive action

<sup>107</sup> From an examination of incomplete files for 1851-2.

<sup>108</sup> Cincinnati *Nonpareil*, Dec. 15, 20, 30, 1851.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb.-May, 1852.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 4, 1852.

<sup>111</sup> Chase to E. S. Hamlin, Dec. 5, 1851, Feb. 25, Mar. 10, 1852, in American Historical Association, *Annual Report, 1902* (Washington, 1903), II, 238-41; Chase to Hamlin, Feb. 8, 1853, Chase MSS (Library of Congress).



for betterment cannot be determined. Probably discontent with wages and hours had a far greater influence. The weapons of the modern labor movement were being forged for practical ends and labor was losing its humanitarian idealism.

The years 1853-1854 were marked by numerous strikes and much labor unrest throughout the country. Cincinnati, then third in rank among American cities in the value of its manufactured products, was much affected by these tendencies. Prosperity and high prices had not improved the status of labor and organization for exerting pressure on employers seemed the only effective weapon. Unions appeared among the bricklayers, carpenters, painters, chairmakers, stone masons, plasterers, iron workers (including finishers, pattern makers, boiler makers, molders and blacksmiths), plumbers, cabinet makers, steamboat engineers, draymen and omnibus drivers, all demanding wage increases, shorter hours and sometimes a closed shop, or at least a preference for union over non-union employees.<sup>112</sup> Collective action was sufficient in some cases to induce employers to yield, but where they resisted, strikes followed in which the budding unions seem to have been generally successful. Only the printers, an older organization of much strength, struck a snag when three newspapers resisted their demands for a wage scale that seemed disproportionately higher than those of other trades.<sup>113</sup> Even the day laborers walked out in at least one instance in protest against a twelve-hour day, while the boys in a bagging factory caught the fever and struck for higher wages.<sup>114</sup> Parades, attempts to intimidate non-union workers and occasional acts of violence accompanied strikes then as later but the violence does not seem to have been at all widespread. At Cleveland labor difficulties also appeared though on a much smaller scale and apparently with less favorable results for labor.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>112</sup> This list was compiled from a large number of brief items in the *Cincinnati Gazette*, 1853-4.

<sup>113</sup> *Gazette*, Nov. 26, 28, Dec. 2, 17, 1853.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 1, June 5, 29, 1853.

<sup>115</sup> *Cleveland Herald*, Mar. 15, Apr. 19, 1853; *True Democrat*, Mar. 7, 9, 23, 25, 29, 1853. The *Herald* attributed the labor troubles to English agitators, familiar with English trade unions.



While public opinion was inclined to look askance at this surprising assertiveness of the working classes, one phase of the movement had the sympathy even of conservative newspapers. The underpaid, overworked seamstresses were objects of public pity and their efforts at improving their lot won general commendation. At Cleveland in 1850 the seamstresses organized to support a strike of the journeymen tailors as women were being used by employers to break the strike.<sup>116</sup> It does not appear, however, that anything definite came of this movement. At Cincinnati in 1853 an organization of seamstresses had the support of public spirited citizens who formed a committee to deal with the employers.<sup>117</sup> Some 68 out of 88 employers visited by the committee agreed to a higher scale of wages. The problem, however, was complicated by the large number—some four thousand at Cincinnati—attempting to earn a living with the needle. Wages of one to six dollars per week were the consequence with hours of work unlimited as much of it was done in the home. An attempt to furnish employment through a cooperative store went the way of most enterprises of such character. Creditors levied on the articles on sale and the sponsors were left with a debt of \$320 to pay.<sup>118</sup> It was generally agreed that improvement would come only when women could enter other occupations. Even this was not an unmixed blessing, however, as women and girls were used by the Cincinnati *Gazette* in its efforts to break the printers' strike referred to earlier.

Most of the labor organizations of the first half of the decade speedily dropped out of sight, apparently having been organized for certain immediate ends. The Panic of 1857 and the depression which followed further flattened out the movement. It revived when international unions of iron molders, and machinists and blacksmiths appeared in 1859.<sup>119</sup> By 1860 a labor movement was again in evidence in Ohio as a force to be reckoned with. Then, with the printers, molders and some other fairly well established unions of

<sup>116</sup> Cleveland *Herald*, Aug. 19, 29, 1850; *Ohio Cultivator*, VII, 62 (Feb. 15, 1851).

<sup>117</sup> Cincinnati *Gazette*, Apr. 5, 11, 29, 1853.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 26, 1853.

<sup>119</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1877, 30.

Cincinnati as a nucleus, a "Committee on Behalf of the Trades Assembled" issued an address calling upon the unorganized to organize in self-protection and for all the trades to send delegates to a general assembly. It is not clear from the newspaper accounts how far this attempt at organization was carried, but apparently the work was soon well under way for the Molders' Union brought their national president, Isaac J. Neal, to Cincinnati on May 16 to speak at Melodeon Hall on "Combination."<sup>120</sup>

The more radical spirits, with the German workers as their chief support, were much concerned about the political possibilities in the labor movement. At a public meeting of workingmen, Frederick Oberkline denounced political parties as unfair to labor and urged the formation of a local labor party. The resolutions as passed, however, indorsed John C. Fremont for president with Cassius M. Clay as his running mate. At a German Republican meeting Oberkline expressed his willingness to support the Republican ticket if it were identified with his principles. This meeting passed resolutions in favor of the Philadelphia (1856) and Columbus (1859) Republican platforms and against the presidential candidacy of Edward Bates of Missouri, a conservative. When Lincoln was nominated, the German papers gave him their support, though they had preferred Chase or Fremont, and talk of a labor party subsided.<sup>121</sup>

Perhaps the strongest argument for a better organization of the working classes was furnished by a measure introduced in the Ohio legislature in the spring of 1860. Outside the industrial cities the miners represented the only active labor element.<sup>122</sup> Because of difficulties with the coal miners' unions in the Mahoning Valley over the closed shop principle, David Tod, prominent Democratic politician and mine owner, supported by nearly a hundred Youngstown citizens, secured the introduction of a bill in the assembly to punish conspiracies to use violent means in preventing an indi-

<sup>120</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Mar. 13, 26, 28, May 17, 1860, for labor activities.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 21, 22, 23, May 24, 25, 1860.

<sup>122</sup> Athens *Messenger*, Aug. 19, 1859, mentions a strike of 150 miners at Nelsonville against an attempted reduction in wages.

vidual from peacefully prosecuting his business. The effect would have been not to prohibit strikes but to cripple unions in conducting them. One section even forbade individuals to "threaten to violently assault" as well as to assault with violence.<sup>123</sup> The outburst of indignation from the laboring classes fostered by the Cincinnati unions effectually killed the bill, but it served as a warning of impending dangers from the growing industrial interests unless labor organized to protect itself. It was an argument for organization which workers could easily comprehend. It signified the beginning of the era of conflict between capital and organized labor in the political as well as in the industrial field. Labor, however, in pre-Civil War days, was mainly concerned in defending itself. Government was not regarded a weapon for achieving positive ends; the laissez-faire theory generally prevailed with labor and capital.

The story of labor's advance in the Civil War years and immediately following can only be suggested here. In the growing industrial cities and in the coal and iron centers organized labor made its power felt. The war prosperity, beginning in 1862, bringing price rises and a shortage of workers, made organization necessary and wage advances easy to obtain.<sup>124</sup> Many of the unions were local, as national unions had not been established in most trades, but they had the backing of city trades assemblies, with Cincinnati taking the lead. Lobbyists for labor watched proceedings at the State capital and were not without influence. Unions, though generally hostile to political action, could operate through the city assemblies, representing all the local unions. Of the unions organized in these years, the railway brotherhoods of locomotive engineers and firemen, dating from 1863 and 1873 respectively, were most solidly established. Cleveland became their national headquarters.<sup>125</sup> On the whole, by 1870 labor in Ohio was as well organized as in any state in the Union.

<sup>123</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Mar. 6, 12, 13, 19, 1860.

<sup>124</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1877, 33-4; Cleveland *Leader*, Feb. 8, May 4, 1864; Cincinnati *Gazette*, Oct. 9, 1865.

<sup>125</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1877, 38. It is impossible to do justice to the labor movement within the space limitations of this volume. A careful study of its history in Ohio is needed.

One needs only to consult the files of a leading newspaper to become aware of the existence of a labor problem by 1870. A telegraph operators' strike in California against a wage reduction by the Western Union resulted in strikes all over the country with Ohio, of course, affected. The hostility toward the strikers shown by leading Cincinnati newspapers, regardless of politics, may have been a factor in the collapse of the strike.<sup>126</sup> The reputedly pro-labor *Enquirer* saw no reason why the grievances of forty or fifty men in California should be made the common cause of three thousand men all over the country and the source of annoyance and inconvenience to people everywhere.<sup>127</sup> The radical Republican Cleveland *Leader* was equally emphatic in condemning the striking operators.<sup>128</sup>

More to the point was a strike of cigar makers, then organized in two unions at Cincinnati. The manufacturers combined into a "union" and resolved to discharge union workers, whereupon the latter walked out in an attempt to bring the employers to terms. The strikers even threatened to form cooperative associations which would enter the field of cigar making. The *Commercial* deplored the fact that the cigar business was being driven from the city by these altercations, but admitted that men working on the lower grades of cigars had difficulty averaging fifteen dollars a week.<sup>129</sup> The ultimate outcome of the controversy was not made clear. In this same paper in 1870 and 1871 were recorded labor troubles and strikes involving ship carpenters, harness makers, and coopers at Cincinnati, iron molders at Springfield, miners in the Tuscarawas Valley, at New Straitsville, and around Nelsonville, stone cutters at Columbus and Dayton, and printers at Dayton and Cleveland. In Cleveland the *Leader* reported strikes of coopers, molders and miners in or near the Forest City in these same years. These illustrations, which could be multiplied, indicate the extent of labor organization and labor ferment.

<sup>126</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Jan. 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 19, 1870.

<sup>127</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, Jan. 6, 1870.

<sup>128</sup> Jan. 5, 6, 7, 10, 1870.

<sup>129</sup> Jan. 14, 18, Feb. 1, 4, 1870.



The years of prosperity prior to 1873 worked in the interest of labor. "The want of a common understanding among employers has placed them heretofore entirely in the hands of employees, who by a little understanding advanced their wages at pleasure. Wages now in the vicinity of Cincinnati are higher than anywhere else, and generally keep up to war prices, though values of every kind of property have fallen immensely," commented the *Commercial*.<sup>130</sup> It reported approvingly that Walnut Hills employers had agreed to limit wages for transient work to \$1.50 per day and \$30 to \$35 per month. A business man advocated the opening of a labor bureau to attract skilled immigrants to the rapidly growing city.<sup>131</sup>

Wage scales in these years of good times varied according to local conditions but some figures may be cited. In 1871 Ohio carpenters were reported as averaging \$2.73 per day, shoemakers \$2.30, masons or bricklayers \$3.37.<sup>132</sup> Farm laborers averaged \$1.28 per day in summer and \$1.00 in winter, without board. In 1872 daily wages paid at Norwalk, Huron County, one of the smaller cities, were approximately as follows: carpenters \$2.50-\$3.00, blacksmiths \$2.50-\$3.00, masons \$2.75-\$3.00, machinists \$2.50-\$2.75, painters \$2.25-\$2.50, inside laborers \$1.50-\$1.75, outside laborers \$1.50-\$2.00.<sup>133</sup> In the peak year of 1872, Cincinnati painters received \$3.00-\$3.50 per day, plasterers \$2.50-\$3.50, and bricklayers \$4.00-\$5.00.<sup>134</sup> Workers in foundries and machine shops in different cities reported average weekly wages ranging from \$13.40 for engineers to \$21.37 for molders.<sup>135</sup> Occasionally molders received as much as \$30.00 per week. The working week was sixty hours in length. By 1877 these levels were reduced forty per cent or more and there was much unemployment.

<sup>130</sup> Aug. 4, 1870.

<sup>131</sup> July 22, 1870.

<sup>132</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, June 21, 1871, citing the statistical bureau at Washington.

<sup>133</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1877, 260. Letter of a Norwalk correspondent.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 1877, 259. See also comparison of 1860 and 1865 in Cincinnati *Gazette*, Oct. 9, 1865. Wages had advanced one hundred per cent but so had the general price level.

<sup>135</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1877, 114.



The labor legislation of the decades of the fifties and sixties, as compiled by the Ohio Commissioner of Labor Statistics in 1878, consisted of two acts.<sup>136</sup> One was the law of March 19, 1852, limiting the hours of labor per day to ten for children under eighteen and for women employed in "manufactories, workshops, and other places used for mechanical and or manufacturing purposes," and also providing that a legal day's work in such businesses should be ten hours "when the contract of labor is silent upon the subject, or where there is no express contract." The penalty for violating the first section of the law was a fine of not less than five or more than fifty dollars. There was no machinery provided to enforce the law and in the years following its passage little attention was paid to it. In many instances, if one may judge from their reports to the State Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1877 and 1878, employers were unaware of the existence of the law. The power of organized labor, not the arm of the State, determined wages and hours.

The other piece of legislation presumed to affect labor was an act passed in 1867 to provide for the creation and regulation of cooperative trade associations. It merely prescribed how a group might organize a corporation to buy and sell merchandise co-operatively. Its terms give no hint that it was of particular concern to labor.

Labor unions might incorporate in Ohio under the general corporation code of 1852 as amended in 1872 to include persons associating for the purpose of "mutual protection and relief," and for the payment of benefits to the families or heirs of deceased members.<sup>137</sup> This law also was not written primarily for labor unions.

Organized labor, in the years of plenty, had few grievances that required legislative action. The movement for a legal eight-hour day was taken up in Ohio in 1865 and the two houses of the General Assembly in 1866 actually favored such a bill, the house by a vote of 70 to 14, the senate by a vote of 19 to 10.<sup>138</sup> The house, however, later postponed action on the bill, which had been amended by

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 1878, 322-4.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 1878, 328.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 1878, 266-7.

the senate and returned to the house, and it was never repassed. The movement in the East for the eight-hour day in 1872 produced some sympathetic reactions among Ohio's workingmen, but the press was hostile and nothing was accomplished. The Cincinnati *Commercial* referred to the movement as "anti-American" and the "eight-hour delusion."<sup>139</sup>

More popular was the opposition to contract prison labor, for employers also resented the competition of the favored contractors.<sup>140</sup> The State penitentiary and the Cincinnati workhouse were the chief offenders, as they leased the labor of prisoners to private contractors who could undersell manufacturers paying wages to free labor. The molders were particularly affected as hardware, light castings and hollow-ware (pots, spiders, tea kettles) were prison specialties. The protests of labor were ineffective, however, in curbing the evil.

Child labor had not as yet reached serious proportions by 1870. Though 38,032 children under fifteen were reported as employed in that year, 28,069 were classified as agricultural laborers, evidence apparently that farm boys then, as in frontier days, went to work at an early age. The fact that 2,471 boys under fifteen were engaged in manufacturing and 441 in mining was a warning of evils to come.<sup>141</sup> The use of boys in factories and shops under the pretense that they were "apprentices" was an evil that labor unions, with their restrictions on the number of apprentices permitted in a trade, recognized and attempted in vain to checkmate.<sup>142</sup>

On the whole, labor seemed comparatively well off prior to 1873. Factories and workshops operated on a small scale; the owner himself usually managed the business; absentee stock ownership was exceptional; grievances could be adjusted through personal conferences; and individual skill was still a prime factor in wage

<sup>139</sup> See especially June 22-29, 1872. The Labor Reform party is referred to in Chapter XV.

<sup>140</sup> Discussed in Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1877, 322-38. See also Cincinnati *Commercial*, Dec. 20, 1870, Feb. 15, 17, Mar. 6, 1871.

<sup>141</sup> Compiled from census statistics in Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1878, 275.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 1878, 306-7.

determination. So long as business was good and labor in demand, relations of employer and employee were fairly satisfactory. Expanding industry seemed to afford opportunities for the ambitious as never before in the Nation's history. Only when the blight of a great depression fell over the land did the harsher aspects of industrialism reveal themselves. Then the lusty giant of happier days seemed to assume the shape of a grasping, greedy monster.

## CHAPTER II

# Urban Life

BY 1870, the city was coming into its own. The expansion of commerce and industry accompanying the spreading network of railroads concentrated population in the larger towns and made cities of those located at strategic points. Ohio had nine municipalities with more than five thousand residents in 1850; it had twenty-six in 1870. These growing urban centers were confronted with new duties and new responsibilities, which were to test the working of democratic government as the frontier had not. Such matters as police and fire protection, public health, a water supply, transportation, street paving, a lighting system, adequate housing, regulation of the liquor traffic and the suppression of vice grew more difficult with the increasing concentration of population. The self-reliant individualism of a rural society could not prevail here. The city had to take care of its people. In these transition years there was much groping and fumbling, and progress was slow. A sense of civic responsibility was developing, but municipal government proved to be a creaky, ramshackle vehicle, designed for an earlier day, and threatening to collapse under its increasing load. The fault, however, lay as much with the State as with the municipalities.

The legislation for municipalities under the Constitution of 1851 became in a few years a legal jungle in which even court and assembly at times lost their way.<sup>1</sup> It began, innocently enough, in an act of May 3, 1852, repealing all special charters then in force and setting up a general code for the government of cities and villages, since special acts conferring corporate powers were forbidden

<sup>1</sup> The above discussion is summarized from Delos F. Wilcox, *Municipal Government in Michigan and Ohio*, *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law* (New York), V (1896), 381-408.



by the Constitution. A population of five thousand was fixed as the dividing line between incorporated villages and cities, while the latter were divided into two classes, those above twenty thousand population constituting the first class, those under that number the second class. Villages were to be governed by a mayor, a recorder and five trustees, all elected; cities elected a mayor, two trustees, or members of council, from each ward, and some other officials, though the council might create additional ones to be elected by the voters or by the council itself. Cities of the first class also had some special boards, including three water-works trustees, three city commissioners, and three infirmary directors, all popularly elected. Mayor, civil engineer and city commissioners formed a board of city improvements under the council. Taxing and borrowing powers were carefully limited. This was in keeping with the clause in the Constitution of 1851 requiring such restrictions "to prevent the abuse of such power."<sup>2</sup>

In 1853, a supplementary act required the consent of the council before a municipality advanced to a higher grade, and modified somewhat the financial restrictions of the earlier law. The effects of the optional clause were evident in a few years. Cleveland soon had sufficient population and moved into the first class with Cincinnati, but ultimately only Toledo joined them in this group, while seven other eligible cities (by the census of 1890) chose to remain in the second class. Thus the original division lost its meaning.

Restrictions on borrowing and taxing powers proved too rigid for all cities. Certain municipalities wanted provisions of the general code modified to enable them to deal with local problems, and within a few years the General Assembly was back in the business of enacting special laws. These were thinly disguised as general laws nominally applicable to all cities in a carefully defined population group. Thus Cleveland's government was reorganized by general laws applying to cities of the first class with a population of less than eighty thousand. The Forest City was the only one in this

<sup>2</sup> Article XIII, Section 6.



category. Legislation for Dayton applied to all cities of the second class having more than twenty thousand population and less than twenty-five thousand, but this definition fitted only Dayton in the 1860's. By 1872 legislative ingenuity devised an act which empowered villages or cities containing a population of 5,641, by the census of 1870, to erect car shops.<sup>3</sup> That this meant the city of Delaware there could be no doubt. There are instances where the name of a particular street appeared in these so-called general laws.

The Ohio Supreme Court, while rejecting laws creating special corporations by name or conferring corporate powers on them, permitted the spirit of the Constitution to be violated by this complex system of classification by population. A municipal corporation could be empowered to do things anonymously but not under its own name. The court even upheld the constitutionality of local legislation provided such laws did not create a corporation or confer corporate powers. Thus individual school districts and boards of education could be legislated for, as they were not corporate bodies. Special boards to conduct certain municipal functions, such as control of the police, if they were created by the assembly and were independent of the municipal corporation, were held to be constitutional.<sup>4</sup>

The proper solution of the whole question of municipal government would seem to have been a broad grant of home rule to cities under a general law which would permit wide powers to local authorities and some discretion as to the type of government. This was the twentieth century method. The General Assembly, however, wanted to hold a restraining hand on local officials in financial matters and felt that the requirement of legislative permission to build a sewer, erect a court house or establish a cemetery, even though generously conceded, had a salutary effect. And there were occasions when it found it advisable to revamp a metropolitan police system by legislation.

Columbus is an excellent example of a typical community in that

<sup>3</sup> Wilcox, *Municipal Government*, 391.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 403-4.

first flush of industrialism when overgrown towns were struggling to fit their rural patterns of life to the requirements of a more complex society. Cincinnati's growth has been chronicled in earlier volumes of this history, and in any case the metropolis was something apart from, indeed almost foreign to, the life of the State as a whole. Its counterparts were to be found in the great cities of other states, chiefly in the East. Cleveland, become a metropolis overnight, represented the extreme of population growth between 1850 and 1870. It was scarcely typical. But among the secondary Ohio cities whose populations by 1870 had passed the ten thousand mark—eight in number, topped by Toledo with 31,584—the capital city pictures admirably the growing pains of an urban civilization.

Columbus in its physical aspects left much to be desired.<sup>5</sup> Its sweltering summer heat brought swarms of flies and mosquitoes and its badly drained streets, cleaned after 1859 in desultory fashion by a prison chain-gang, collected garbage, ashes and refuse in the gutters faster than they could be removed.<sup>6</sup> Street sweeping with horsebrooms was instituted in the late 1860's but was not kept up. Asiatic cholera ceased to be epidemic after the early 1850's but public health still fell far short of modern requirements. As late as 1872 the city council was appointing a committee to provide for "burying dead animals and the offal and filth of the city."<sup>7</sup>

The police force, consisting of ten regular and twenty special officers under a captain in 1858, was better than the "twelve night watchmen and three for day service" of preceding years, but its inefficiency and inadequacy were subjects of newspaper complaint.<sup>8</sup> Later reorganizations—in 1868 the force numbered twenty-five—produced slight improvement. The officers were now garbed in navy blue, singlebreasted frock coats, with pants, caps and over-

<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the above account of Columbus is taken from Alfred E. Lee, *History of the City of Columbus* (New York and Chicago, 1892), II. This is one of the most complete and detailed local histories. The author has also consulted the *Ohio State Journal* and the *Ohio Statesman*, but these have not been used in footnote citations.

<sup>6</sup> William Dean Howells, *Years of My Youth* (New York, 1916), 191-6.

<sup>7</sup> Lee, *Columbus*, II, 490.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 482-90, for the police system and the activities of mayor and council.

coats of the same material, but politics and a division of authority between the mayor and the council made law enforcement rest lightly on their blue-clad shoulders. The council practically controlled the police personnel, leaving the mayor helpless to regulate their conduct or to carry out his executive functions. For example, ordinances to close liquor establishments on Sunday were laxly enforced or ignored, to the annoyance of the temperance elements. The mayor contended that the responsibility was not his as he lacked disciplinary power over the police. In 1873 Columbus and Dayton were brought under the metropolitan police law, enacted for the largest cities, which gave the governor power to appoint four commissioners who, with the mayor as an ex-officio member, took control of the police system. The next year the commissioners were made elective. This step reduced the power of the council but did not add materially to the mayor's authority.

Politics dominated city government and Columbus suffered accordingly. The fairly even division of parties frequently made the election of a president of the city council an endurance affair. In 1866 it required 287 ballots before a decision was reached, and the result was disputed even then. Ultimately the successful candidate resigned and twelve more ballots were necessary to choose his successor.<sup>9</sup> The controversy had dragged on for several months. Meanwhile, five city garbage carts and horses were sold at a constable's sale to satisfy wage claims of municipal employees.

The general law of 1852 for municipalities and supplementary legislation, particularly the municipal code of 1869, created several elective city offices and authorized the council to create others.<sup>10</sup> The voters thus chose seven or eight administrative officials at the April elections and two councilmen from each ward, one each year for a two-year term. This resulted in a diffusion of responsibility and an overlapping of functions that made efficient municipal government impossible. Insufficient revenues for the growing needs of the city further complicated the problem.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 487, 495, note 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 483, 489.

Street improvement made slow progress. It was done unsystematically, gravel, stone, wood block, asphalt and various combinations being tried and generally found wanting in a year or two.<sup>11</sup> On High Street the fine Nicholson wooden block, put down in 1867 at a cost of \$10.88 per front foot, was showing signs of giving way in three years, was completely gone by 1874, and was replaced the next year by "Parisen asphalt." Only a few down-town streets were "paved," dust and mud being the portion of the rest of the city.

The first sewer was laid in 1849, but not until after the Civil War was construction begun on a large scale, and even then there was little system or planning to the work.<sup>12</sup> Bad construction caused stoppages and sewer gas leaked into the streets above. Raw sewage flowed into the Scioto River and sometimes accumulated behind the State dam in times of low water, becoming a danger to public health. Typhoid and other diseases were doubtless caused in part by the defective sewage system and the use of wells for drinking water. They continued to plague the city for many years.

The problem of a satisfactory water supply bothered the city fathers for a long time before definite action resulted. Wells and cisterns served to provide water for homes, though subject to contamination from cesspools and surface drainage, while public cisterns were constructed to serve as reservoirs for fire protection. The fire danger was the leading argument used for a waterworks system, rather than the need for water for domestic use. If the fire was near enough to the river, the hose tapped that source. The spectacular burning of the Neil House, November 6, 1860, brought home the need for an adequate water supply and aroused popular interest in the question. The Civil War delayed action and it required another serious conflagration, the burning of the insane asylum in 1868, to precipitate matters. Even so, it was not until March, 1871, that water was actually flowing through a system of pipes. The water was drawn from a huge well, sunk near the junction of the

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 519 ff.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 686-94; II, 529-31, 541-3, for sewage and water systems.



Olentangy and Scioto, and was pumped to all parts of the city after being filtered through "filtering galleries." A board of trustees managed the water-works system for the city.

Fire protection was provided by volunteer companies organized and supervised by the city council through the 1850's. A steam fire engine was purchased in 1855 but it was not always effective, tending to freeze up in cold weather, and hand engines operated by volunteers continued to be used. Seven men constituted the paid personnel of the department in 1856. In 1861 two new steamers replaced the old one and a genuine fire department came into existence with paid firemen to operate the engines.<sup>13</sup> The Neil House fire of 1860 had been the turning point.

Columbus was rather tardy in securing gas for lighting purposes, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton and Zanesville already having such a convenience when a company first began to sell gas in the capital city in December, 1850.<sup>14</sup> It was manufactured from coal and cost private users three dollars per thousand feet at first. The use of natural gas did not come until the 1880's.

As the city grew, local transportation became more of a problem. Omnibuses, at first operating to and from the railroad station, and "hacks," the taxicabs of the pre-gasoline era, were the chief reliance.<sup>15</sup> The city council, by ordinance, fixed the fare for the latter at twenty-five cents a person but it was frequently violated, especially during the Civil War, for the soldiers thronging the city were free spenders. The introduction of horse-drawn street cars dated from 1863. In a few years several lines were being operated between the outlying sections and the business district by a number of different companies. Service was bad, the tracks and cars were often in poor condition, drivers and conductors worked a fifteen-hour day for \$1.00 and \$1.50 respectively,<sup>16</sup> and profits were uncertain. The fare was usually five cents if five tickets were purchased at a time, seven cents for a single ticket.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 548-53.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 557-8.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 304 ff. for transportation problems.

<sup>16</sup> Ohio Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report, 1877* (Columbus, 1878), 258-9.



Two parks added to the attractiveness of the capital city. Dr. Lincoln J. Goodale donated forty acres lying north of the city for park purposes in 1851, and in 1867 the city council purchased some twenty-five acres on the south side and created City Park.<sup>17</sup> These, with the grounds around the Capitol and the State institutions, provided sufficient parks for a city of thirty thousand.

The chief pride of Columbus residents was the new State House, opened in 1857. Its origin and early vicissitudes have been dealt with in the preceding volume of this series.<sup>18</sup> It was unfinished in 1852 when the old Capitol was destroyed by fire, yet five years more were required before it was sufficiently completed to be formally opened. Henry Walter of Cincinnati was the architect of the original plan, which was somewhat modified as the building took form. Work was suspended for several years in the 1840's, and after it was resumed, William Russell West was the architect in charge. He resigned in 1854 after differences of opinion with the commissioners representing the assembly, and N. B. Kelley took his place. The latter found the ventilating and heating arrangements unsatisfactory and made a number of alterations in these. Two eminent eastern architects, to whom the plans were submitted for examination and report in 1856, recommended certain changes and offered the general criticism that full and complete plans should have been prepared in the beginning. The "dome" was not changed, however, as they advised, and the controversy, begun years before, over the proper form of the superstructure, was settled by the construction of a "cheesebox" cupola.

The beautiful Doric structure was formally opened, January 6, 1857, with some ten thousand visitors in Columbus for the ceremonies. Governor Chase delivered the chief speech, banquet tables filled the rotunda, and there was dancing in the senate chamber. However, the building was not regarded as finally completed until 1861, thirty-three years from the date of its inception. The State

<sup>17</sup> Lee, *Columbus*, II, 535-7.

<sup>18</sup> Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850*, Carl Wittke, ed., *History of the State of Ohio* (Columbus), III (1941), 412-3.

had spent \$1,359,121.45 altogether on its construction, including improvement of the grounds.<sup>19</sup>

Although proud of the capital city and its State institutions, citizens of Columbus lacked certain cultural opportunities afforded by Cincinnati.<sup>20</sup> Their one theater, the Dramatic Temple, opened in 1855, developed chronic financial troubles, changed ownership several times and offered theatrical fare of very uneven merit. William Dean Howells called it "the barnlike structure on State Street which served the pathetic need of the drama in Columbus at that day," with its "two huge cast-iron stoves" which could not quite overcome the blasts of chill air that swept from the stage when the curtain rose.<sup>21</sup> Yet some good actors appeared in this theater, for Columbus, with its excellent rail connections, was on the route usually taken by companies of players touring the West. A new "opera house," later known as Comstock's, on South High Street, took over the burden of the drama in 1863, and one reads of the appearance of such stars as Clara Morris, Laura Keane, Lawrence Barrett, Edwin Forrest and Joseph Jefferson. In 1871 the old theater on State Street was reconstructed and reopened under a new name and the city had two playhouses.

Music fared somewhat better than the drama. Several halls were available for concerts and music lovers listened to Jenny Lind, Adelina Patti, Ole Bull, Clara Louise Kellogg, Christine Nilsson and other nationally famous artists, while traveling opera companies visited the city more frequently after the opera house was available. Local musical organizations seemed to flourish for a time and then decline. To the Beethoven Association, founded in 1856, was attributed the purpose of exterminating "the Uncle-Ned and Oh Susanah [*sic*] sort of music."<sup>22</sup> Among the Germans, however, the Columbus Männerchor, founded in 1848, and the Liederkrantz, organized in 1866, showed greater vitality.<sup>23</sup> In 1852 and again in

<sup>19</sup> Lee, *Columbus*, II, 565-77.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 787-97, for music and the drama in Columbus.

<sup>21</sup> Howells, *Years of My Youth*, 151.

<sup>22</sup> Lee, *Columbus*, II, 793.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 768-70.

1865 the North American Sängerbund held its annual festival in Columbus.<sup>24</sup>

In its social life Columbus was unique among Ohio cities. Before the war boom made it into a military camp, the capital was a place of attractive homes and quiet shaded streets where the art of living had not been destroyed by the quest for gain. To it came the wit and wisdom of the State, legislators, lawyers, journalists, teachers, farmers, physicians, reformers of every type, to attend assembly, court, or convention, and in some cases to remain as residents while holding office or practicing their professions. Young William Dean Howells, for a time assistant editor of the *Ohio State Journal*, has painted an unforgettable, though too romanticized, picture of the society of which he was a modest part. Then an aspiring poet, he had found newspaper work in Cincinnati repugnant to his soul—"that university of the streets and police-stations, with its faculty of patrolmen and ward politicians and saloon-keepers."<sup>25</sup>

In Columbus he chose to work on the old *Ohio State Journal* at half the salary the Cincinnati *Gazette* would have paid, for the congenial companions and surroundings were compensation enough. A few examples will explain his choice. On one occasion the young journalist and a colleague enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner at the home of the retiring governor, the distinguished Salmon P. Chase, who carved the turkey and had the plates served by a "shining black butler." Charades played after dinner were made the livelier under the direction of the hostess, beautiful, vivacious young Kate Chase, later the queen of Washington society when her father was Secretary of the Treasury and Chief Justice and she had become the wife of a senator.<sup>26</sup>

In the homes of two eminent legal authorities Howells was given a cordial welcome.<sup>27</sup> To be invited to a party at the residence of

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 790, 794-6.

<sup>25</sup> *Years of My Youth*, 141. While Howells' description of his life in Columbus was written half a century afterward and the picture is too romantic, the substantial truth of his factual statements can be verified from contemporary newspapers.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 170-2; Mildred Howells, ed., *Life in Letters of William Dean Howells* (Garden City, N. Y., 1928), I, 19.

Judge Joseph R. Swan of fugitive slave law fame was the greatest distinction Columbus society could offer. The other jurist was Noah H. Swayne, later appointed by Lincoln to the United States Supreme Court. At homes like these the ambitious young writer found people to talk of Hawthorne and Goethe, and a young woman who "sang divinely" Schubert's *Serenade* and other selections, and another who was versed in German literature. He met young Richard Realf, an English poet who knew Lady Byron and was involved in John Brown's raid.<sup>28</sup>

In another prominent home, that of public-spirited Dr. Samuel Smith, who served for a time as State Surgeon-General during the Civil War, Howells was treated almost as a member of the family. Afflicted at times with hypochondria, he made the warm-hearted physician a father confessor and his house a second home. "It was not only a literary house, it was even more a musical house, where there was both singing and playing, with interludes of laughing and joking in all forms of seemly mirth, with the whole family till the little boys of it stumbled up the stairs half asleep."<sup>29</sup> When Howells was leaving Columbus to take the consulate at Venice, Italy, Dr. Smith called him into his office and loaned him two hundred dollars to help provide for the expenses of the journey.

In this society Howells found a greater pecuniary equality than at a later period, and simpler and freer manners than in the East. Invitations to parties did not usually require a formal acceptance, and the hostess was consequently in doubt as to the number of her guests. If a young man desired to escort a young woman, "he found out as delicately as he could whether she was invited, and if she was he begged her to let him go with her, and arrived with her in one of the lumbering two-horse hacks which supplied our cab-service and which I see still bulking in the far perspective of the State Street corner of the State House yard."<sup>30</sup> There was a southern flavor to the social life of Columbus which Dr. Washington Gladden

<sup>28</sup> Howells, *Years of My Youth*, 182, 191-2; *Life in Letters*, I, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Howells, *Years of My Youth*, 164; *Life in Letters*, I, 22.

<sup>30</sup> Howells, *Years of My Youth*, 157.



detected when he came to the city in 1882, more than twenty years after Howells had observed it.<sup>31</sup> The cordial hospitality of Virginia and Kentucky had come with the first settlers and was preserved after a fashion by their descendants for many years. "The Southern taste for the classic and the standard in literature," in the words of Howells, prevailed with the older generation of the pre-war days and carried over into the next.<sup>32</sup>

Yet not only in the homes but among the temporary residents and visitors could one find stimulating company. Howells tells of lunching at a German eating place with "Artemus Ward" (Charles Farrar Browne), then on the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* but soon to achieve nation-wide fame as a humorist; of arguing literature with Moncure D. Conway, young Unitarian minister of Cincinnati and disciple of Emerson; of eating oyster stews cooked over a chafing dish at the Ambos restaurant by James M. Comly, handsome young law student, brigadier-general in the Civil War, later editor of the *Ohio State Journal* and minister to Hawaii; of taking his meals at a boarding house where pie was served with a knife as the sole tool but where he enjoyed the company of Whitelaw Reid, then representing the Cincinnati *Gazette* but later war correspondent, editor of the New York *Tribune* and ambassador to England, "a tall graceful youth with an enviable black mustache and imperial, wearing his hair long in the Southern fashion, and carrying himself with the native ease which availed him in a worldly progress uninterrupted to the end."<sup>33</sup>

In the *Journal* office Howells was at first the assistant to fastidiously dressed Samuel R. Reed, a brilliant, ironical editorial writer who could quote the Bible, Shakespeare and Dickens with equal facility but who believed that the composition of grand opera was "the highest feat of the human intellect." Both editors were under the more or less intermittent supervision of the proprietor and nominal editor, Henry D. Cooke, "the easiest of easy gentlemen,"

<sup>31</sup> Washington Gladden, *Recollections* (Boston and New York, 1909), 284.

<sup>32</sup> *My Literary Friends and Acquaintances* (New York, 1901), 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Years of My Youth*, 144.

brother of Jay Cooke, wealthy eastern financier and banker. After Reed left the paper, Howells and young Samuel Price edited it with amazing audacity and doubtful wisdom in the months covering Lincoln's election and the secession of the lower South.

Into their newspaper office one day came Horace Greeley, famed editor of the New York *Tribune*, stopping in Columbus on some journey to the West. He lectured the editors of the *State Journal* on the proper conduct of their paper, all the while "sitting on the corner of a table, with his soft hat and his long white coat on, and his quaint child-face, spectacled and framed in long white hair."<sup>34</sup> Into this same office on another day came a young State senator, James A. Garfield, to edify the editorial staff by reading Tennyson to them at ten o'clock in the morning. Howells could appreciate the future President's love of literature, for he himself wrote poetry whenever his journalistic duties permitted. He and his roommate, Thomas Fullerton, were two of the four contributors to the *Atlantic Monthly* living west of the Alleghenies. No higher honor could come to a literary aspirant than the recognition of its editor, James Russell Lowell.

Walking the capital city's streets with Howells in the winter of 1860-1861 was a sculptor of much promise, John Quincy Adams Ward, a native of Urbana, who had gained a reputation in the East and had returned to Ohio in the hope of securing a commission from the legislature for a statue of Simon Kenton. The Civil War blasted his hopes in this respect but his talents ultimately placed his name high on the list of famous American sculptors. Another artist in stone, Thomas D. Jones, enjoyed a local reputation and was a familiar figure in the Columbus that Howells has described so well.

If one preferred the society of statesmen and politicians, he sought it at the Neil House, "then the finest hotel in the West, without a peer even in Cincinnati." Here sojourned all visitors of distinction, and all politicians, great and small, "who held their conclaves in its gloomy corridors and in its office and bar on the

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

eve of nominating conventions or the approach of general elections." Sometimes they sat "under its porches in tilted arm-chairs as the weather softened, canvassing the civic affairs which might not have been brought to a happy issue without them."<sup>35</sup> This famous old structure burned to the ground on the night in 1860 that word was being flashed over the country of Abraham Lincoln's election to the presidency. Its passing symbolized the end of an era, both for the capital city and the Buckeye State.

The Civil War and the rapid growth of the city during the 1860's—from 18,000 to 31,000—transformed Columbus from a provincial capital to a city in its own right. The pre-war society—more small town than urban in character—could not be preserved for long in an industrial age. There is no vivid picture of the years of change, for the gifted young editor left the city as the hordes of volunteers were thronging its streets in 1861. Yet Olive Logan, lecturer on woman's rights, was favorably impressed in 1865. The *Ohio State Journal* of July 15 quoted from her article in the *New York Leader* as follows:

"Beautiful villas, nearly or quite surrounded by wide-spreading trees, by well-kept gardens, full of the rarest flowers, and possessing so many other attributes of the country as might well cause one to believe they were situated miles out of town, while in reality they have the very great advantage of being only around the corner from the principal street, are features of which Columbus may well be proud. There is a certain elegance about the shops, too; and, above all, a perfect cleanliness in the streets, which New York itself might emulate with advantage."

The matter-of-fact letters and diary of Rutherford B. Hayes, who lived in the capital from 1868 to 1872, also reveal that life in Columbus still retained some of the charm of earlier days. Not only did the elder Hayes enjoy his years as governor but his son Webb seems to have had as good a time in Columbus as any boy in country or city anywhere. He played baseball, ten pins, parlor

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

croquet, billiards and whist, shot firecrackers at New Year's and on the Fourth, was kept in after school for "cutting up" in the class room, and had the occasional privilege of driving the family horse and carriage through Columbus streets.<sup>36</sup> Yet the son of Ohio's governor enjoyed few advantages that were not equally available to almost every youth in any Ohio city and small town, Cincinnati and Cleveland excepted. The harsher aspects of urban life were not much in evidence outside those two cities.

To Cincinnati the problems confronting the other Ohio cities in the 1850's and 1860's were an old story. In 1850 it had a population one-fourth larger than that of Cleveland twenty years later. With 216,239 people in its corporate limits in 1870, it was larger than the next six Ohio cities combined. It had a water-works system, gas lighting, sewers, street railways, and all the outward marks of a metropolis while the other Ohio cities were still in swaddling clothes.<sup>37</sup> Its parks, public buildings, school system, colleges, libraries, churches and charitable institutions placed it in the van of western cities. Yet along with these marks of progress were its slums, liquor establishments, houses of prostitution and other evidences of the darker side of urban life. The best and the worst were to be found in the metropolis.

Housing and public health were especially bad in Cincinnati and Cleveland. Except in these two principal cities, a family usually occupied a whole house and at least had breathing room, though the house might be hardly more than a shack. But in the Queen City in 1868 were 1410 tenement houses with six or more families to each house.<sup>38</sup> A total of 9,894 families comprising 38,721 persons occupied these buildings. Over forty per cent of the families had but one room each, and five-sixths of these one-room apartments had but one window to the room. Most of the other families living in tenements had two rooms each. The buildings were from two to

<sup>36</sup> Manuscript Diary of Webb Hayes, 1871 (Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont, O.).

<sup>37</sup> Cincinnati before 1850 has been described in Volume III of this series.

<sup>38</sup> The above account is summarized from Ohio Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report, 1878* (Columbus, 1879), 287-92, based chiefly on reports of the Cincinnati Board of Health in earlier years.



six stories in height and were veritable fire-traps, for they had but one stairway, as a rule, and no fire-escapes. In 1869, Cincinnati had the unenviable distinction of being the most densely populated city in the United States, measured by the number of inhabitants to the square mile. It ranked third in number of persons per dwelling with an average of 8.81.<sup>39</sup> In one ward the number to a dwelling was 14.45 persons. Cincinnati was said to be more congested even than London.

Sanitation in its slums approached the primitive in character. A quotation will suffice to prove the case:

"There are many large tenement-houses in this city without one square yard of air space, excepting that used as an entrance. A single privy is provided, in most instances, for the occupants of the building, and it is commonly placed at one end of the entrance way, so that it is almost impossible to prevent the gaseous [*sic*] exhalations arising from it from being disseminated through the entire building, poisoning the atmosphere, and causing discomfort, disease and death."

When cholera came to Cincinnati in 1873, it is not surprising that 142 of the 207 dying of the disease were residents of tenement houses and boarding houses. Thirty-four died in private residences, the others in hospitals or places not ascertained. Local regulations were ineffective in dealing with the housing problem and efforts to get action from the General Assembly proved futile.<sup>40</sup>

The conclusion of the Commissioner of Labor Statistics in 1878 was equally applicable eight or ten years earlier:

"Two rooms, front or back, in the second, third, fourth, and even fifth story of a barracks, hemmed in on all sides but one, is the average home of the workingman in the Queen City of the West, and for these two rooms he pays an average rent in excess of

<sup>39</sup> Ohio Secretary of State, *Statistical Report, 1872* (Columbus, 1873), 364-76, gives the number per dwelling in the four leading Ohio cities by wards. The figures were taken from the census of 1870.

<sup>40</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report, 1878*, 289.

the rent of four-roomed tenements in most of the towns and smaller cities of the State.”<sup>41</sup>

In Cleveland the average number of persons to a dwelling was only 5.2, lower than the figures for Columbus or Dayton, but the city had its slum areas, too. Tenement houses were not the problem here as in Cincinnati. Rather the presence of unsanitary shanties, shacks and dilapidated houses, unfit for occupancy but crowded with miserable human beings, drew the fire of the press and the city board of health. An investigation in 1873 revealed some sickening conditions due to overcrowding, filth and lack of sanitary facilities. A general clean-up campaign followed. The board of health evicted “squatters” and destroyed their shanties, compelled owners of untenable houses to tear them down or repair them, cleaned up vacant lots, streets and alleys, and attempted to improve both the appearance and the health of the city.<sup>42</sup>

Street cleaning and garbage disposal had made progress since the days when such matters had been left largely to scavenging hogs, but that once ubiquitous animal had not entirely disappeared from Cincinnati’s streets by 1860. The special correspondent of the London *Times* who accompanied the Prince of Wales on his American tour wrote a flattering account of Cincinnati’s appearance but commented on the number of hogs running loose in the streets. The editor of the *Commercial* indignantly refuted the criticism with the assertion that he had not seen ten hogs on the streets in a month.<sup>43</sup> “Delicate Nerves,” writing to this same paper, complained of the filth and odors of the city. “Our streets are more dirty, our alleys more full of filth, and our gutters more conducive to nausea than those of any town with which we are acquainted. Besides this, our atmosphere, during a large portion of the year, reeks with the perfumery of swine’s flesh to a degree that is quite unprecedented, and in many localities, worse odors, from bone and bristle and lard oil and glue and soap and whisky factories, smell to

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>42</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, July-Sept., 1873.

<sup>43</sup> Nov. 9, 1860.

heaven." The writer charged that an ordinance for the removal of garbage passed several months earlier had not been enforced.<sup>44</sup>

Cleveland's special odors were provided by its oil refineries. Newspaper complaints of the unbearable odors on hot nights produced legislation to abate the nuisance, but one irate citizen sued the Standard Oil Company, charging that the "noisome exhalations, acid fumes and vapors" of one of its refineries had made his house untenable, caused his family loss of sleep and illness, and had killed fruit trees and vegetation on his property. The corporation wisely settled the case out of court.<sup>45</sup> The resident of Columbus in 1867 who complained of the smell of dog fennel and other weeds should have rejoiced that he did not live in Cincinnati or Cleveland. Toledo was afflicted with "herds of swine" that might be seen "every hour of the day on our principal streets, lanes and alleys," and was overrun with "multitudes of geese." <sup>46</sup>

Drunkenness, vice and crime flourished in the cities.<sup>47</sup> Cincinnati in 1860 had 1,722 saloons, besides many groceries and fruit stores which sold liquor, making an estimated total of over 2,000 liquor establishments.<sup>48</sup> They complied with the Sunday closing ordinance by closing their doors but not locking them. Cleveland was still under this total in 1871 when 1,252 persons paid a retail liquor dealer's tax. "Of these," commented the *Leader*, "at least one thousand keep low, obscure rum holes, where only the vilest and most poisonous liquors are ever sold." <sup>49</sup> Prostitution was increasing after the war, and municipal authorities could do little to check it. When the inmates of disreputable houses and their visitors became too disorderly or a crime was committed on the premises, arrests followed. Occasionally a "clean-up" campaign would drive them under cover for a time. With some counties not reported, 202

<sup>44</sup> Oct. 22, 1860.

<sup>45</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, June 28, 30, 1870; Ohio Works Progress Administration, *Annals of Cleveland, Court Record Series*, VIII (Cleveland, 1939), 1871-2, 263.

<sup>46</sup> Lee, *Columbus*, II, 523; Toledo *Blade*, Nov. 10, 1865.

<sup>47</sup> For the temperance movement, see Chapter XIV.

<sup>48</sup> Communication signed "T", Cincinnati *Commercial*, July 21, 1860, citing records of police department.

<sup>49</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Feb. 8, 1871.

persons in Ohio were indicted or were facing indictments for keeping houses of ill fame during the year ending July 1, 1870. Of those tried and convicted, one received a jail sentence, three were both fined and imprisoned, and fifty-three were merely fined. Four were acquitted.<sup>50</sup>

Sometimes outraged citizens took matters into their own hands. In January, 1858, a large assemblage of Cincinnati citizens, residents of the Seventh Ward, resolved to use force if the houses of prostitution were not closed within thirty days; apparently the threat was not carried out.<sup>51</sup> At Cleveland in July, 1860, a vigilance committee, disguised as "darkeys," broke the doors and windows of several houses of prostitution, smeared coal tar on floors, walls, furniture and the belongings of the occupants, and made the places uninhabitable. In May, 1866, a Bible class in the first ward took a careful census of all liquor establishments and houses of prostitution in the ward and made public their findings.<sup>52</sup> A few years later the ladies of the Women's Christian Association announced that they had obtained from the inmates the names of all men who had visited certain houses. The editor reported that several young men had inquired if this were true, and he had verified the facts.<sup>53</sup> Whether this threat of exposure was effective or not was not revealed.

The problem of the suppression of vice was much discussed in 1871, as St. Louis was experimenting with a system of legal registration, taxation and medical inspection.<sup>54</sup> The annual report of the Ohio Board of State Charities devoted several pages to a discussion of the problem. Its conclusions were unfavorable to the St. Louis system. The secretary of the board proposed that the legislature establish a home for the reformation of fallen women where prostitutes could be confined until they gave evidence of a purpose to abandon their former mode of life.<sup>55</sup> He had visited a Detroit

<sup>50</sup> Secretary of State, *Statistical Report*, 1871, 115.

<sup>51</sup> Cincinnati *Gazette*, Jan. 23, 1858.

<sup>52</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, July 23, 26, 28, 1860; May 10, 1866.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 14, 16, 1871.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 16, 21, Mar. 1, 1871.

<sup>55</sup> Board of State Charities, *Annual Report*, 1871 (Columbus, 1872), 103-9.



experimental "House of Shelter" and was impressed with its work. In several Ohio cities private charity had already provided homes for "destitute fallen females."<sup>56</sup> Municipal authorities continued, however, to deal with the problem as in the past. Thus the Cleveland City Council passed another suppression ordinance in May and raids on houses of ill fame followed.<sup>57</sup> Yet a year later it was estimated that there were forty such establishments in the first police precinct.<sup>58</sup>

For the less sombre side of urban life one may turn to the revolution in sports and recreations that marked the years following the Civil War. Hunting, fishing, swimming and such man-to-man competitive sports as shooting, foot racing, rough-and-tumble wrestling and other feats of strength and skill sufficed for the frontier generation, engrossed in the problem of making a living in a new country.<sup>59</sup> Horse racing and cock fighting also had their devotees, particularly among those who preferred the role of spectator, rather than participant in sports. Often a wager added zest to the occasion. As cities grew and material prosperity gave more time for recreation, popular interest in sports developed. This was becoming evident even before the Civil War.

A perusal of the Cleveland newspapers for the early 1850's reveals the existence of a chess club, two cricket clubs, a gymnasium and horse racing, rather sparse fare for the lover of sports.<sup>60</sup> A curious throwback to an earlier day is found in an announcement of a race between a number of deer and any dog entered against them, the deer to serve as prizes.<sup>61</sup> By 1860 the Cincinnati *Commercial* was mentioning cricket matches, town ball games, and horse racing (trotting), and occasionally it ran a column headed "Sporting Matters."<sup>62</sup> It also devoted much space to the famed Heenan-

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>57</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, May 24, July 2, 1871.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 24, 1872.

<sup>59</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 124-5.

<sup>60</sup> Compiled from Ohio Works Progress Administration, *Annals of Cleveland, Cleveland Newspaper Digest*, 1851-53.

<sup>61</sup> *Cleveland True Democrat*, Sept. 12, 1852.

<sup>62</sup> For example, issues of Apr. 20, May 24, June 25, July 2, 25, Aug. 9, 10, Oct. 11, 1860.

Sayers prize fight in England for the world's championship, an evidence of reader interest, though few Ohioans had first-hand knowledge of formal ring bouts. The puritanical regarded them as immoral and brutal, and a State law prohibited such matches in 1868, placing heavy penalties on the participants and upon anyone involved as a "backer, trainer, second, umpire, assistant, or reporter."<sup>63</sup>

The Civil War accustomed thousands of young Americans to out-door life, ball games were played in army camps, and an interest in sports was developed that carried over into civilian life afterwards. The war also revealed what many observant persons had long been aware of, the poor physical condition of so many Americans.<sup>64</sup> A leading Ohio newspaper thought that few nations had so many feeble and pale specimens of humanity and attributed this condition chiefly to lack of exercise.<sup>65</sup> That a revolution was under way by 1864 seems likely from the Cleveland *Leader's* comment: "There has been no better symptom of a healthy growth of public opinion than the progress which has been made within the few years past in the cultivation of athletic games." Its remark that to be a good baseball or cricket player in a school was to enjoy honors equal to those bestowed on a valedictorian indicates that the day of the athlete was at hand.<sup>66</sup> All too soon the greater share of the glory was to come to him.

Most popular of all pastimes after the war was baseball. When and where it was first played in the Buckeye State is still uncertain. It was played in the East before the war and may have reached Ohio, although the evidence is not clear.<sup>67</sup> A news item in the Cleveland *Leader* for July 9, 1859, does not help matters. It reported that a baseball game had been played at Jefferson, Ashtabula County, in

<sup>63</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, May 1, 2, 1860; Cleveland *Leader*, May 14, 1860; Ohio Laws, Acts, 58 Assemb., 1 Sess., 1868, LXV, 29-30.

<sup>64</sup> Allen Nevins, *The Emergence of Modern America* (New York, 1928), A. M. Schlesinger and D. R. Fox, eds., *A History of American Life*, III, 222-3.

<sup>65</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Oct. 30, 1860.

<sup>66</sup> Aug. 2, 1864.

<sup>67</sup> For the eastern origins, see Albert G. Spalding, *America's National Game* (New York, 1911), 3-88.

which the first side to get one hundred "scores" won. Sixty-four-year-old Joshua Giddings, just retired as a member of Congress, scored every time at bat. The *Leader* commented that baseball had been a favorite with early settlers and was still in vogue in Ashtabula County. This raises the question as to whether this was actually modern baseball or some early variety, once played by the pioneers. Or, more likely, was it town ball, perhaps imported from New England? The last named game was being played at Cincinnati by 1858. It used a smaller playing field, a short bat held in one hand, a small ball and could be played with ten to fifteen players or even more on a side. A base runner was put out by being hit with a thrown ball.<sup>68</sup>

A town ball club in this same city was also playing some baseball, apparently intra-club, by the fall of 1860. It became the Live Oak Baseball Club in July, 1866, and is said to have played the first match game in Cincinnati on September 8, 1866, with the Eagle Baseball Club of Brooklyn. Another Cincinnati town ball club also turned to the modern game at about the same time. It was known as the Buckeye Baseball Club. A third, composed mostly of members of the bar and including Harvard and Yale graduates, was organized in 1866. This was the Cincinnati Baseball Club. The three clubs played each other and also had matches with out-of-town teams. Cricket helped to develop baseball in the Queen City as many players received their early training in the English sport. The Union Cricket Club brought Harry Wright from New York to bowl for them but he was soon a baseball star on the Cincinnati Club. The games of the latter were played for a time on the grounds of the cricket club.<sup>69</sup>

Other Ohio cities seem to have been ahead of Cincinnati in playing match games. The Forest City Club of Cleveland was organized late in the summer of 1865. The Cleveland *Herald* of September 2 blessed the event in these words: "We are happy to notice

<sup>68</sup> Harry Ellard, *Base Ball in Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, 1907), 30; Spalding, *America's National Game*, 37-9. The Cincinnati *Gazette*, June 29, 1858, refers to the Excelsior Town Ball Club as playing an intra-club game.

<sup>69</sup> Ellard, *Base Ball in Cincinnati*, 31-44.

that a club has been organized for playing that exciting American athletic game, base ball. It is gratifying to see our young men looking to the open air for that recreation essential to health. The cool and invigorating evenings of Autumn will now be very favorable for out door amusement." At first the players divided into two teams which played each other, but presently they challenged the Penfield Club of Oberlin, which seems to have been playing—or practicing—for some time. They met on October 20 at Cleveland in what was regarded as the first match game ever played in Ohio. A considerable crowd turned out to endure seven long innings of baseball lasting from one o'clock to five-thirty. The more experienced Penfield Club won, 67 to 28. One Cleveland player suffered a sprained arm; another had three front teeth knocked out when he collided with a teammate in trying to catch a fly ball. The game was played in a "fierce gale."<sup>70</sup>

The next summer the same teams met in a three-game series to decide possession of a "silver ball" and a "silver inlaid rosewood bat." The Clevelanders won the deciding game and the rosewood bat, 36 to 18. They lost to Detroit later, whether "from want of practice or from nervousness"—the first but not the only Cleveland team to suffer from the "jitters"—but gave a "sumptuous supper" to the victors at the Kennard House. They came to Columbus on October 25 to defeat the Capital Club of that city, 72 to 44, before several thousand spectators, including a justice of the United States Supreme Court and leading State officials. Cleveland had nearly a dozen organized clubs in this first year of the new baseball craze.<sup>71</sup>

Ohio was represented in the National Association of Baseball Players in 1865, and in 1867, with forty clubs from the State in the association, supplied the president, George F. Sands. An Ohio association had been formed by forty-three clubs in September, 1867. A tournament at Cincinnati in this same month attracted huge crowds, including five thousand ladies.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Cleveland *Herald*, Oct. 21, 1865.

<sup>71</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, July 6, Aug. 27, Oct. 17, 22, 27, 1866; *Ohio State Journal*, July 7, Oct. 26, 1866.

<sup>72</sup> Ellard, *Base Ball in Cincinnati*, 29, 48-9, 55-60.





FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOS TAKEN AT THE TIME IN CINCINNATI.  
BY HOAG & CO.

The climax of early baseball interest in Ohio came in 1869 when the famous Cincinnati Red Stockings took the field as the country's first professional team. Originally known as the Cincinnati Club, they adopted cricket uniforms—shirt, cap, long trousers—and red stockings in 1867, had four salaried players in 1868, and went completely professional in 1869. The National Association, at first purely amateur, had divided the players into two classes in 1868. The salary scale of the Red Stockings ranged from \$600 for the one substitute to \$1,400, paid to George Wright, shortstop and early baseball's outstanding player. The salary total was \$9,300. Harry Wright, George's brother, was captain. George B. Ellard, owner of the largest sporting goods establishment in the West, took the lead in organizing the team. Alfred T. Goshorn, later director-general of the Centennial at Philadelphia and knighted by Queen Victoria, was president.<sup>73</sup>

After playing several games at home, the team went on an eastern tour, climaxed by a game with the Mutuels at Brooklyn, in which the home town fans displayed much of the same animosity toward the visitors that has marked loyal Dodger rooters since. Notwithstanding the pressure of the crowd of ten thousand, the Red Stockings, led by the cool-headed, even-tempered Harry Wright, defeated the Mutuels, 4 to 2, a remarkably low score as baseball was then played. In Cincinnati, red lights were burned and salutes fired, and happy crowds milled through the streets when the telegraph carried the news. President Grant received the victors at the White House, and on their return to Cincinnati, undefeated in the East, they were accorded a great reception culminating in a banquet at the Gibson House. A tour to California was equally successful and the Red Stockings closed the season without a defeat, becoming the unquestioned national champions.

From September, 1868, to June, 1870, they were undefeated, winning 130 straight games. Their Waterloo came at the hands of the Atlantics of Brooklyn, June 14, 1870, when they lost in eleven innings, 8 to 7. Their record in 1870 was 68 games won and 6 lost.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-213 for a detailed history of the Red Stockings.

They headed the professional group with 14 victories to 6 defeats.<sup>74</sup>

A typical box score is given below. The Harvards were the champion university team and came to Cincinnati to play the Red Stockings on July 18, 1870.<sup>75</sup> The attendance was about two thousand.

## BOX SCORE

Harvards	O.	R.	B.	T.	Cincinnati	O.	R.	B.	T.			
Eustis, r.f.	4	1	2	5	G. Wright, s.s.	4	2	1	2			
Wells, c.f.	4	1	1	1	Gould, 1st b.	4	2	1	2			
Perrin, 1st b.	5	1	2	2	Waterman, 3d b.	1	4	2	2			
Bush, c.	3	2	2	2	Allison, c.	4	3	1	2			
Austin, s.s.	1	4	2	2	H. Wright, c.f.	2	2	1	1			
Goodwin, p.	2	3	1	3	Leonard, l.f.	4	2	1	1			
Thorp, l.f.	3	2	2	2	Brainard, p.	2	2	2	2			
White, 2d b.	2	2	2	3	Sweasy, 2d b.	3	2	2	4			
Reynolds, 3d b.	3	1	1	2	McVey, r.f.	3	1	0	0			
Total	27	17	15	22	Total	27	20	11	16			
<i>Innings</i>												
Harvards			0	3	0	4	3	7	0	0	0	-17
Cincinnati			4	0	5	0	0	2	0	1	8	-20

First Base on Errors—Harvards 9, Cincinnati 11

Home Runs—Eustis 1

Base Play—Put out by Harvards 14, Cincinnati 10

Passed Balls—Harvards 9, Cincinnati 1

Fly Catches—Harvards 10, Cincinnati 14

Foul Bound Catches—Harvards 3, Cincinnati 2

Out on Strikes—Harvards 1

Double Plays—Harvards 1

Umpire—Mr. C. Mills, of the Mutual Club, of New York

Scorers—Messrs. A. M. Barnes and E. P. Atwater

Time of Game—2:55

"The umpiring," said the *Commercial* reporter, "was very unsatisfactory, being very slow and not in accordance with the rules which require the calling of balls and strikes." The Red Stockings were also criticized for putting on "milk-and-water contests" before the home fans. Only by scoring eight runs in the ninth inning had they succeeded in overcoming the collegians, 20 to 17. On the Sunday preceding the game the Harvards were escorted to places of worship by their opponents and later visited points of interest in the city and suburbs.

<sup>74</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Nov. 16, 1870.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, July 18, 19, 1870.

The Red Stockings ceased to exist as a professional team after 1870. Salaries had become too high and the club was viewed as an expensive luxury by its backers. Other cities were bidding for players and local interest was declining.<sup>76</sup> For the next two years the Forest City Club of Cleveland, which had been playing for several years, was Ohio's only professional baseball team. It finished in sixth place among the eight professional teams playing in 1871, and also sixth among ten clubs in 1872.<sup>77</sup> Baseball was now being played in the smaller towns by amateur and semi-professional teams, and had become firmly established in the Buckeye State. Young Webb Hayes records in his school-boy diary, September 12, 1871: "Went to see a game of B B. between Croghans [of Fremont] and Grasshoppers of Findley [*sic*]. Score C39 G23."

Devotees of other sports found plenty of opportunities in the post-war years to indulge in their favorite pastimes. Sports ceased to be individual and clubs were organized to provide facilities for their members and sometimes for public entertainment. Cleveland probably had a more varied diet in this respect than most Ohio cities because of its location on the lake and because the winters were colder there than in the cities of the Ohio Valley. In the early seventies the newspapers mention such sports as baseball, horse racing, boxing, foot racing, walking matches, gymnastic entertainments, yacht racing, rifle shooting, billiard matches, curling and skating.<sup>78</sup> There were baseball teams, cricket clubs, a curling club, rifle clubs, a trotting club, the Cleveland gymnasium, three ice skating rinks and other sport facilities and organizations. For those who preferred mental gymnastics, a whist club and a chess club were available. The latter even played inter-city matches with a Detroit club by telegraph.<sup>79</sup>

Ice skating is an excellent illustration of the commercialization of an old pastime. Ponds, river and lake provided the opportunities

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 23, 25, 1870; Ellard, *Base Ball in Cincinnati*, 210-1.

<sup>77</sup> Spalding, *America's National Game*, 160-3; *Cleveland Leader*, 1871-1872, various items.

<sup>78</sup> Compiled from *Cleveland Newspaper Digest*, 1870-72.

<sup>79</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, Feb. 11, 12, 19, 21, 1870.



when Cleveland was a small town, but by the early 1860's the skating park, made by damming a stream to cover as much as twenty acres, was being used, and season tickets—\$3 for gentlemen, \$2 for ladies and children under twelve—were offered to the public.<sup>80</sup> By 1870 skating was carried on chiefly in rinks supplied with heated sitting rooms, refreshment stands, bands and the added attractions of special performances by paid trick and speed skaters.<sup>81</sup>

A further evidence of commercialization and professionalism in sports is found in the growing popularity of horse racing, accompanied by the sale of "pools," or betting. At the second annual meeting of the Cleveland Trotting Club in July, 1872, purses amounting to \$22,000 were offered in four days of trotting, pacing and running races. Large crowds attended and betting was heavy.<sup>82</sup>

The chief commercialized amusements, apart from sports, were those old institutions, the theater and the circus with its menagerie. The role of the former is discussed in later pages of this volume. The latter was being revolutionized by the railroad. The old fashioned wagon show could travel such short distances daily that it had to perform in numerous small towns and could not count on large revenues. Thus McArthur, Logan and Nelsonville were visited on successive days in 1853 by "Raymond and Co. and Van Amburgh and Co's Menageries United," with "150 living wild animals." Logan, the largest of these towns, had a population of only 826. A second tent show appeared here this same summer.<sup>83</sup> Such shows could not compare with that famous circus of the early seventies, "P. T. Barnum's Great Travelling Museum, Menagerie and World's Fair," which appeared at Cincinnati in July, 1872. It occupied "Six Separate Colossal Tents, Covering Five Acres of Ground," gave three performances daily, and charged fifty cents admission, except for children under nine who were admitted at half price. A full page in the Cincinnati *Commercial* told of its wonders—and full page advertisements were rare indeed.<sup>84</sup> Such a

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 10, 1860, Jan. 1, 1861, Jan. 4, 1862.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan.-Feb., 1870.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, July, 1872.

<sup>83</sup> Logan *Hocking Sentinel*, July 7, Sept. 1, 1853.

<sup>84</sup> June 1, 1872.

show, traveling by rail, could not afford to visit the smaller towns. It remained five days in Cincinnati and three in Cleveland. However, the railroad could now bring the eager circus fans from the villages and farms to the cities. Thus even in the field of popular amusements revolutionary changes were being wrought.

The urban pattern of life was taking form by 1870 though much of the shape of things past persisted. Rural ways of life and habits of thought still characterized the typical city dweller. Proud, even boastful, of his city's rapid growth, he learned only slowly and painfully that size meant problems of which the villager had never dreamed. The early seventies, however, were no time for pessimism. Americans were on the make, and the city was the place for the ambitious to get ahead.

## Agricultural Ohio

AGRICULTURE seemed to have reached its peak in Ohio by 1850. At no time in its history has the State occupied a more commanding position as a farming center. No state surpassed it in the production of corn and wool and but one other produced more wheat.<sup>1</sup> In numbers of horses and sheep it stood at the top, but it ranked second in cattle and milch cows, fourth in hogs and third as a producer of oats and potatoes. Only the older and more populous states of New York and Pennsylvania were wealthier in terms of the cash value of improved lands. Because of its high position in so many different fields of agricultural production Ohio deserved to be called the leading farming State in the Union in 1850. At least, in diversified agriculture it was not surpassed by any other state.

The two great grain crops, corn and wheat, were the basis of the State's agricultural wealth. Despite the unscientific character of their cultivation, both crops were apparently increasing down to 1850 due to the natural fertility of the soil and the quantity of unused land still available for exploitation. Wheat, though cultivated all over the State, was primarily a northeastern and central Ohio crop. The National Road from Columbus east to the Ohio River constituted a kind of southern boundary for the wheat area as fourteen of the fifteen leading wheat counties in 1850 lay on or north of this line.<sup>2</sup> The heart of the wheat belt was the "Backbone Region," that strip of counties just south of the Western Reserve, extending from the Pennsylvania border more than halfway across the State. Massillon, Stark County, was the wheat capital of the

<sup>1</sup> From the census tables in *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850* (Washington, 1853). The *Ohio Cultivator*, VI (Aug. 15, 1850), 241, complained that the census figures on wheat production, taken for 1849, were unfair as this was an exceptionally bad year. Otherwise Ohio would have ranked first.

<sup>2</sup> Tabulated from the census figures, as are the statistics used elsewhere for 1850.

country, receipts by wagons sometimes reaching 10,000 bushels a day in the harvest season.<sup>3</sup> Northwestern Ohio was still largely forests and swamps, while the southeast, the unglaciated area, was too hilly and broken, except for a few fertile valleys, to produce agricultural exports of much value.

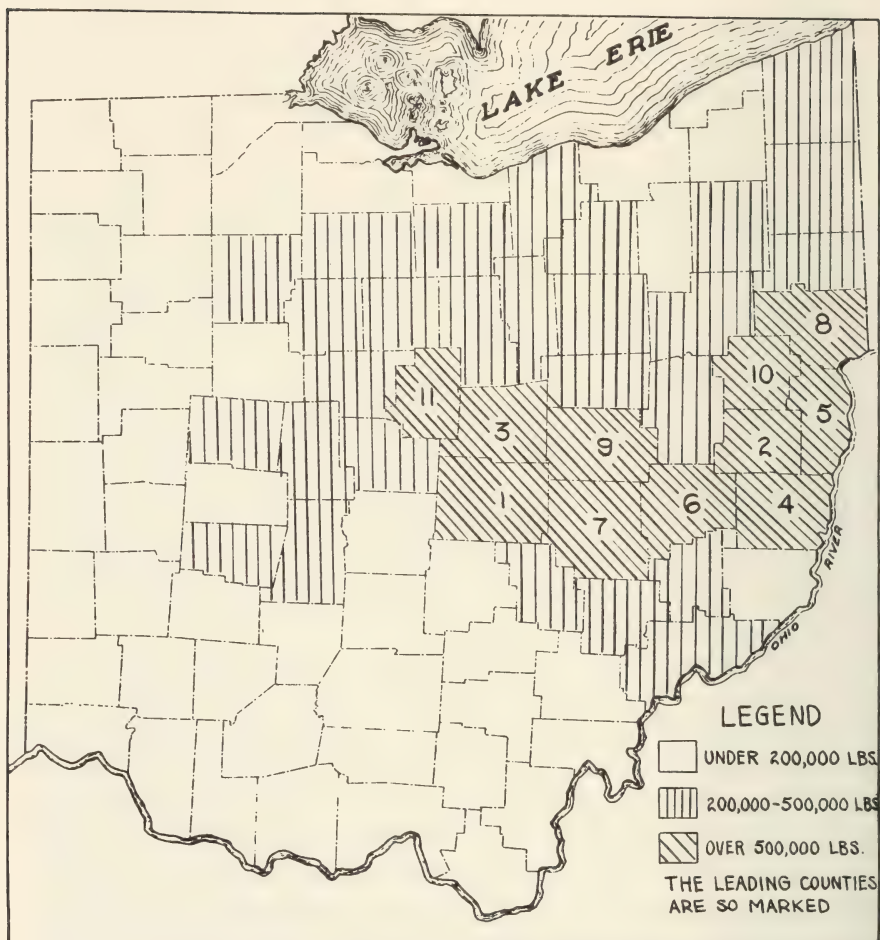
Corn, on the other hand, was the great crop of the Scioto and Miami valleys and the counties adjacent to them. Its area extended over into the wheat belt in the east central part of the State where Licking and Muskingum counties were divided in their allegiance between the two great cereals, but fifteen of the eighteen leading corn producing counties lay in the southwestern quarter of the State. Here fertile valleys and a warmer climate than in the north made corn the greatest farm crop and Ohio consequently the leading corn producing State. Wheat was profitable here but corn was surer. Other crops, particularly hay, potatoes and oats, were important, while among fruits Ohio's grapes gave her a commanding position as a wine producer, but her agricultural supremacy rested primarily on her two great cereals.

In the number and value of domestic animals the position of Ohio was equally important. She had nearly four million sheep and was the wool-producing center of the country. Sheep were found all over the north and east from Lake Erie down to the National Road, the area almost coinciding with the wheat belt. This same region also contained a considerable part of the State's cattle and milch cows, though these were more numerous in the northern counties of this area while sheep predominated in the eastern hills. A dairy industry of such importance had developed in the Western Reserve that that region had become known as "Cheesedom." Ash-tabula, Trumbull, Geauga, Portage and Lorain counties were the leaders.<sup>4</sup> In general cows and sheep abounded in the regions of rich pasturage and large yields of hay, a characteristic of the northeast.

<sup>3</sup> *Cleveland Herald*, July 11, 1853.

<sup>4</sup> W. A. Lloyd, J. I. Falconer and Charles E. Thorne, "The Agriculture of Ohio," *Bulletin of the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station*, No. 326 (July, 1918), in *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station* (Wooster, 1919), 87-8.





MAP 3. WOOL PRODUCTION IN OHIO IN 1869

Based upon census statistics for 1870.

Yet another area was particularly noted for its beef cattle. Madison, Pickaway and Ross counties in the Scioto Valley had the finest herds of cattle in the State. The corn belt counties fattened cattle on corn for the eastern markets, driving them there on the hoof, while northeastern Ohio was more interested in milch cows, though its grass-fed cattle were sent east in considerable numbers, often to

be further fattened there.<sup>5</sup> In both cases the eastern market was essential.

As the grass and hay of the northeast supplied the herds of cattle and sheep, so the corn of the southwest furnished provender for the hogs of the Scioto and the Miamis. The ten leading hog counties were found in this quarter of the State.<sup>6</sup> Not without reason had Cincinnati become known as "Porkopolis," for it was the Nation's pork-packing center when Chicago was a wind-swept village.

Ohio's horses and mules were not so localized as were its other domestic animals. They were distributed rather evenly over both great agricultural sections, being most numerous where farmers were wealthiest. No other animal was so essential and so valuable as the horse and no other state had so many.

While Ohio remained a great farming State throughout the fifties, the progress of agriculture was perceptibly slower than in any previous decade. The prairie states were developing at a more rapid rate, an indication that Ohio's primacy was at an end. So far as production is concerned, there were no very pronounced changes. Perhaps the most significant was the decline of the wheat crop. From 1850 to 1854 the total yield fell from 32,700,000 bushels to 11,819,110 bushels, the poorest crop for many years. The ravages of insects and a severe drouth in 1854 were offered as explanations for this decline. Conditions improved somewhat in the latter part of the decade but in no year was there a crop equal to that of 1850, and in 1859, due to a June frost, the yield was almost as bad as in 1854. The Commissioner of Statistics reported that there had been little advance in wheat production in twenty years. The wheat counties of the east and northeast suffered especially from the ravages of the weevil and were producing less wheat at the close of the decade than the leading wheat counties in southern Ohio.<sup>7</sup> This was doubtless a factor in the decline in population of several of the

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 241-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Seventh Census*, 1850, 863-4.

<sup>7</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1861 (Columbus, 1862), 13-5; *Ohio Cultivator*, X (Sept. 1, 1854), 264; XV (July 1, 1859), 193, 195-6; XV (July 15, 1859), 209; Secretary of State, *Annual Report*, 1854-1855 (Columbus, 1855), 5-6, 85-95.



MAP 4. INDIAN CORN PRODUCTION IN OHIO IN 1869

Based upon census statistics for 1870.

eastern and northeastern counties between 1850 and 1860. The small wheat farmers were moving west.

Corn production, on the other hand, was increasing. Though showing fluctuations from year to year, the general trend was upward, the crop of 1860 being the largest on record.<sup>8</sup> This added to

<sup>8</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1861, 13.

the prosperity of southern Ohio, the Miami and Scioto valleys especially.

Of the domestic animals, horses, cattle and hogs had increased numerically between 1850 and 1860, though the middle years of the decade had shown a temporary falling off.<sup>9</sup> The numbers of hogs and cattle were affected materially by the supply and price of corn, the number of horses more by the out-of-state demand for them. Dairy cows were tending to displace other farm animals in the northeastern counties but this had slight effect on the total numbers.

On the other hand, there were fewer sheep in the State in 1860 than in 1850. The low water mark was reached in 1857, after which there was a gradual recovery, but even by 1861 the level of 1850 had not yet been reached. Wool growers complained of price fluctuations and instability of the market for raw wool, and proposals were made for the establishment of a central wool depot, a bank, a wool growers' journal and a model sheep farm, financed by a cooperative arrangement, but little came of this save a state convention or two with the usual favorable resolutions.<sup>10</sup> Low tariff rates on wool were also blamed for the decline in numbers of sheep, but the improvement in 1859 and 1860 does not indicate that the tariff of 1857 had injured the wool growers, nor do the fluctuations prior to that year suggest that the earlier tariff law had had much effect. Neither does the Panic of 1857 seem to have had much influence, for conditions were worse before that disaster than afterward. The destruction of pasturage by the drouth of 1854 seems to have hurt the sheep raisers more than did the panic. One factor that undoubtedly discouraged farmers from sheep raising was the ravages of dogs. In one year, 1858, 60,536 sheep were killed by dogs and 36,441 injured, an estimated loss of \$146,748.<sup>11</sup> No wonder there was a demand upon the legislature, finally acceded to in 1860, for a stringent protective law for the sheep raisers. Whatever the causes for the vicissitudes of the

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. Figures on domestic animals.

<sup>10</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, VIII (Feb. 15, 1852), 54; XII (Oct. 15, 1856), 310; *Ohio Farmer*, VIII (Aug. 13, 1859), 260.

<sup>11</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, XV (Dec. 15, 1859), 372.



wool growers, it is clear that prosperity had come back by the close of the decade.

Summarizing the situation so far as production is concerned, one must conclude that by 1860 Ohio had lost ground relatively as a farming State. The census revealed that it had dropped from first to second as a corn-producing State, from second to fourth in wheat production, and from fourth to sixth in numbers of hogs.<sup>12</sup> It still held its leadership in horses and sheep and remained second in milch cows, but was now fourth in other cattle. Illinois, leading in wheat and corn, could justly claim first place in agriculture. Ohio could still point with pride to the value of its live stock but it was evident that the agricultural center of the United States had moved to the prairies. Ohio had not actually declined but had been overtaken by its Mississippi Valley rivals.

In markets, more than in production, significant changes had come about. The railroads had stimulated the flow of agricultural produce and live stock eastward. Ohio was brought next door to New York City, Philadelphia and Baltimore by the development of the great trunk lines. Wheat, flour and live stock especially went eastward by rail, the old method of driving the animals over the mountains being displaced by rail transportation.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the railroads brought such western farm products as Texas cattle, trans-Mississippi wool, and northwestern grain into competition with Ohio products in the eastern markets and largely destroyed the advantages the latter had possessed in their greater accessibility to the urban East. In general, however, the new method of transportation added greatly to the value of Ohio farms and farm products by breaking down the economic isolation of many communities and enabling the farmers to reach a market. This was especially true of the sections that lay distant from canals and navigable rivers.

Despite evidences of prosperity and progress, by 1870 Ohio had slipped another notch downward in comparison with the other

<sup>12</sup> *Eighth Census of the U. S., Agriculture of the United States in 1860* (Washington, 1864), tables of agriculture by states.

<sup>13</sup> Lloyd, Falconer and Thorne, "Agriculture of Ohio," 243.

farming states. Its rank in the production of farm crops and domestic animals is evident from the following table: <sup>14</sup>

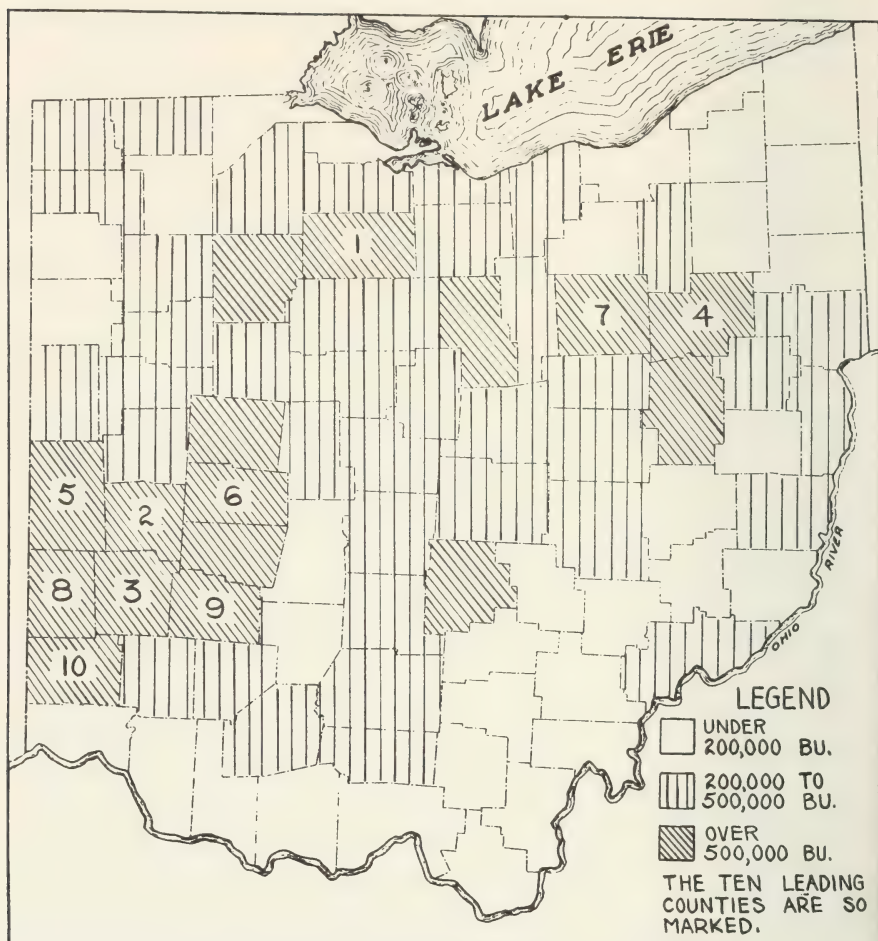
	Rank in 1850	Rank in 1860	Rank in 1870
Wheat	2	4	3
Corn	1	2	3
Oats	3	3	4
Potatoes	3	3	3
Wool	1	1	1
Sheep	1	1	1
Horses (on farms)	1	1	2
Milch cows	2	2	3
Other cattle	2	4	3
Hogs	4	6	6
Value of improved lands	3	2	2

The improved rank in wheat in 1870 was more apparent than real, for the census returns of 1860, based on the exceptionally poor crop of 1859, had underrated Ohio. In cattle the State actually ranked fourth in 1870, instead of third, if the numbers of milch cows, working oxen and other cattle are added together. If the census estimates of horses used for other than farming purposes are included, the Buckeye State was in fourth place in equine population.

The statistical picture presented by the township assessors' reports is that of a somewhat stabilized production at the close of the 1860's.<sup>15</sup> Although affecting certain aspects of agriculture, the Civil War had not greatly altered the general trends of production. The number of horses had increased after the war but there was little change between 1868 and 1871. The numbers of cattle and milch cows had declined since 1860, reaching the lowest point in 1865, but the subsequent recovery still fell short of the total at the beginning of the decade. Sheep, under the war-time demand for wool, increased on Ohio's farms to reach a new high level of 7,688,845 by 1868 but declined sharply after that to 4,302,904 in 1871, as wool

<sup>14</sup> *Ninth Census of the U. S., 1870. Statistics of Agriculture* (Washington, D. C., 1872).

<sup>15</sup> As earlier, census figures have been used for purposes of comparison with other states, but the annual reports of the township assessors have been used to show the year-by-year trends. They appear in annual volumes of *Ohio Statistics*, compiled after 1868 by the secretary of state, succeeding the commissioner of statistics.



MAP 5. WHEAT PRODUCTION IN OHIO IN 1869

Based upon census statistics for 1870.

prices were falling. The numbers of hogs seemed to follow two-year cycles of increases and decreases but there were fewer in 1871 than ten years earlier. Dairy products, after a war-time decline, rose to new high levels by 1870.

Farm crops showed the usual fluctuations from year to year but the average yields indicated little improvement in the 1860's over

the previous decade. Wheat production actually declined due to a bad series of years from 1864 to 1868. The average yield per acre for the years 1860-1869 was 11.21 bushels compared with 12.21 for the preceding ten-year period,<sup>16</sup> an indication of the farmer's failure to cope with the problem of declining soil fertility. The total acreage was smaller in 1870 than in 1860, though the average for the decade was slightly larger than in the 1850's.

Corn made a little better showing, the 88,565,299 bushels of 1870 being exceeded only by the bumper crop of 1860, while the average corn acreage was substantially larger in the 1860's than earlier, though the yield per acre fell from 33.13 bushels to 32.25.<sup>17</sup> Of the lesser cereals, oats increased both in yield and acreage, barley and rye declined, though the yield per acre was better than in the years before 1860. Buckwheat showed the widest fluctuations of any of the cereal crops but the trend was downward in the post-war years. The potato yield was lower in the first half of the decade than in the later years, the crop of 1869 being the largest of all.

Generally speaking, the sectionalism of production that had marked Ohio agriculture before 1850 had lost much of its significance by 1870. The development of the northwestern counties and the increased wheat production of the southwest gave the western half of the State the leadership in wheat and ended the primacy of the old "backbone" counties of the northeast. In 1870, ten of the fifteen leading wheat counties were in the Miami and Scioto valleys; only three were in the northeast.<sup>18</sup> In corn production the southwest also led the State, sixteen of the twenty leading corn counties lying in this area.<sup>19</sup> The northwest was still too thinly populated to furnish any of the leaders but its rapid growth indicated its coming importance as a corn and wheat area, as drainage problems were being solved. With the entire western half of the

<sup>16</sup> Lloyd, Falconer, and Thorne, "Agriculture of Ohio," 128.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>18</sup> Secretary of State, *Annual Report, 1871* (Columbus, 1872), Part II, Statistical Report, 11. The map in the text, based on the census figures for 1869, differs slightly from this. Compare maps above with those in Volume III of this series.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 15. See Lloyd, Falconer and Thorne, "Agriculture of Ohio," maps on page 88 and following.



State a corn-growing region and with wheat no longer confined chiefly to the northeast, the old sectional divisions largely disappeared.

Likewise the raising of domestic animals was no longer so localized. Sheep were raised all over the eastern and central sections, though there were fewer in the Western Reserve; hogs and beef cattle had spread northward into the northwestern counties; milch cows were more numerous in all sections in 1870 than in 1850 though still concentrated in the Western Reserve. The more specialized branches of agriculture, such as dairying, tobacco growing and grape culture were localized for climatic or other reasons, but in most respects Ohio farming was more generally diversified than in 1850.

Price levels, measured in the depreciated currency, shot upward during the war and remained well above the averages for the 1850's in the post-war years.<sup>20</sup> For example, wheat climbed upward during the war to reach \$3.50 per bushel on the Cincinnati market in May, 1867, the average for the year 1866 being \$2.79. It declined to \$1.15 for the year 1869 but was above \$1.50 in 1871-1872. Corn reached its peak of \$1.04 per bushel in 1863 (yearly average), fell to \$.54 for 1865, rose to a post-war peak of \$.92 in 1867, and dropped below \$.50 in 1871-1872. Wool averaged \$.80 per pound for the war years of 1863 and 1865, but receded gradually to a level of \$.48 by 1870, only to rise to a new peak of \$.80 in 1872. This was but temporary, the decline being resumed after this to continue to the end of the century. The average price level for the leading farm products had been at its lowest in the early fifties and in 1860-1861; at its highest in 1854 and in 1863-1864. If prices are given on a gold basis, instead of a paper one, the 1863 level is lower than that of 1854, but in general the post-war years afforded better prices for the farmer than the pre-war ones. However, this was not expressed in most cases by increases in production.

As in other northern states, the war speeded up the mechanization

<sup>20</sup> Price tables in Lloyd, Falconer and Thorne, "Agriculture of Ohio," 211-2.

of agriculture in Ohio.<sup>21</sup> With one-fourth to one-third of the farm laborers in military service by 1863, machinery became a necessity, and even "moss-back" farmers had to admit its value. The president of the State Board of Agriculture estimated the number of reapers and mowing machines at 30,000 to 40,000 in 1866.<sup>22</sup> Women were a partial answer to the labor problem but the situation remained serious until the close of the war.

The war also encouraged attempts at northern self-sufficiency. Ohio farmers experimented with sugar and cotton, and increased their production of tobacco. Sorghum was produced before the war but the shutting off of southern sources of sugar gave it an importance that was hardly warranted by the results achieved. Syrup to the amount of 4,000,000 gallons was produced by the last year of the war but the 67,000 pounds of inferior sugar were small compensation for an enthusiasm that had led to a *Sorgo Journal*, exhibits at county fairs, and several thousand acres under cultivation. Sorghum cane continued to be grown after the war, chiefly for syrup, the crop of 1870 covering 23,450 acres and giving 2,187,673 gallons of molasses.<sup>23</sup> Maple sugar also enjoyed a war-time demand, but the output of 1862—8,254,187 pounds—had dropped to 2,204,325 pounds by 1870 and syrup production had fallen off more than one-half.<sup>24</sup> Sugar beets had been grown in Ohio at least twice before the Civil War but the difficulties of processing caused the experiments to end in failure. The State Board of Agriculture offered a premium of \$1000 in 1861 for five acres of beets and 5000 pounds of sugar,<sup>25</sup> but the results were nil. Not until after 1900 were sugar beets grown commercially in the Buckeye State.

The cotton shortage stimulated attempts to grow that product of hot southern summers north of the Ohio River. Along the river

<sup>21</sup> The author is indebted to Charles M. Brown, a graduate student in history at Ohio State University for the use of a report on Ohio agriculture during the Civil War.

<sup>22</sup> Ohio State Board of Agriculture, *Annual Report, 1866* (Columbus, 1867), Part I, 43.

<sup>23</sup> Secretary of State, *Annual Report, 1871*, II, 28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>25</sup> Ohio State Board of Agriculture, *Annual Report, 1861* (Columbus, 1862), 265.

in the central section, and even along the lake shore little experimental patches were set out in 1862. In the southern counties and near the lake it seems to have matured, but not in sufficient quantities to encourage the experimenters. The State Board of Agriculture was optimistic, and large crowds thronged around an exhibit of growing cotton at the State Fair,<sup>26</sup> but with the opening of the Mississippi the importation of the southern product ended any need for further efforts in this direction.

Tobacco was a fairly important crop in southern Ohio before the war, the State ranking sixth in production in the Union. The cutting off of southern sources of supply was an inducement for Ohioans to enlarge their acreage to 35,000 in 1863-1864, with nearly 30,000,000 pounds being produced. This receded in 1867 to a level of under 11,000,000 pounds but rose again by 1870 to over 21,000,000 with 20,484 acres planted in the weed.<sup>27</sup> The southwestern counties centering in the Miami Valley and a southeastern bloc around Monroe produced nearly all of Ohio's tobacco. The war stimulus had been temporary, and had not been looked upon with favor by farm leaders. Two objections were raised against tobacco cultivation. It exhausted the soil too rapidly and it was a product that the more puritanical put in the category with corn sold to distillers. Both were for immoral purposes.

The war had but little direct effect upon two lines of agricultural activity that made headway during the period. One was grape growing, the other dairying. While most farmers gave some attention to horticulture, grape production was a specialized branch of husbandry in itself, not a by-product. Nicholas Longworth's pioneer efforts have been recorded in an earlier volume of this series.<sup>28</sup> He did much to disseminate a knowledge of grape growing and wine manufacturing, but the Cincinnati area was not so well suited for vineyards as the lake shore and the nearby islands. The latter region, with its long, frost-free growing season and its rich well-drained soil, attracted the attention of grape growers and a mild

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1862, xxxviii, 123-5.

<sup>27</sup> Secretary of State, *Annual Report*, 1871, II, 27.

<sup>28</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 66-7.

boom resulted in the 1860's. The 62 acres of grapes in 1859 became nearly 500 within three years; 500 acres more were grown on the islands.<sup>29</sup> A grape fever centering around Sandusky seized many landholders and the grape belt was soon extended for miles along the lake shore.

The war years were discouraging ones for fruit growers, for weather conditions were exceptionally bad, but the acreage in vineyards steadily increased throughout the decade. In 1865 Ohio had 5,666 acres of vineyards; in 1870—10,890. Production varied greatly from year to year, the grape yield for 1866 amounting to less than 1,500,000 pounds, while the year 1870 saw 15,855,719 pounds on the market at distressingly low prices.<sup>30</sup> Of this total, Erie County produced nearly one-half, with Ottawa, Lorain, Cuyahoga, Lake, Lucas, Fairfield, Ashtabula, Vinton and Tuscarawas ranking next in the order named. The first six and Ashtabula (ranking eighth) were lake counties. In wine production Ohio took high rank. The census statistics for 1860 (from the production for 1859) gave it first place over California. In 1870, when the vineyard center had shifted from Cincinnati to the lake shore, Ohio was only third, but this is misleading. The wine output for 1869, a bad year, was but 155,535 gallons; in 1870 it was 2,577,907 gallons, a remarkable increase, not appearing in the census tabulation, which was based on the figures for 1869.

Dairying became increasingly important in the 1860's. Butter remained a farm product, but cheese, requiring more care and skill, underwent a near-revolutionary shift from farm to factory.<sup>31</sup> Better breeds of milch cows increased milk production, transportation facilities insured wider markets and cheese became a factory product, centering as before, in the Western Reserve. Cheese mak-

<sup>29</sup> Ohio Pomological Society, *Tenth Report, 1861-1863* (Columbus, 1863), 36-7, 41-3.

<sup>30</sup> Secretary of State, *Annual Report, 1871*, II, 7. Grape statistics were first compiled in 1865 and were very incomplete, according to M. B. Bateham, secretary of the Ohio Pomological Society.

<sup>31</sup> Article by A. Bartlett, Ohio State Board of Agriculture, *Annual Report, 1865* (Columbus, 1866), Part II, 170-6; Charles W. Burkett, *History of Ohio Agriculture* (Concord, N. H., 1900), 181-8.



ing on the farm was a hard, laborious occupation and resulted in a product of distressing variability in quality. As early as 1848, attempts at factory production were begun in Trumbull and Ashtabula counties, the farmers near the factory bringing in their curds and being paid by the pound. The resultant product, known as "English Dairy" cheese, enjoyed a measure of popularity in the early 1850's, but supply outstripped demand, and there were complaints about the quality. Inferior curds made bad cheese and there were nearly as many kinds of curds as there were farmers furnishing them.

Several conditions explain the ultimate success of factory methods. Improved vats, presses and other fixtures made possible better cheese. The loss of southern markets during the war forced the cheese makers to look eastward and to England where only the finer grades of cheese could be sold. A visit to a dairy factory at Rome, New York, by Anson Bartlett of Geauga County, Ohio, led to the establishment in 1862 of an Ohio factory along similar lines. The milk, instead of the curds, was collected from the farmers and the entire process carried on in the factory under a cooperative plan. A second trip of inspection to New York by Bartlett, accompanied by four other Reserve dairymen, was even more fruitful and in 1863 Ohio had eight cheese factories of the new type. By 1865 there were eighteen in Geauga County and as many more in neighboring Lake, Ashtabula, Trumbull, Portage and Summit. In February, 1864, an association of cheese manufacturers was formed and the factory system was firmly established. Improved cheese of a more uniform quality and commanding better prices justified the new method, while the farmer and his wife and daughter were relieved of the burden and risk involved in producing home-made cheese and in marketing their product. A cooperative system of distributing the profits, after the manufacturer received his commission, was a further advantage for the milk producers. Thus in the midst of the war an established industry had undergone a revolutionary change.

From 1850 to 1870 Ohio agriculture was being re-appraised by intelligent farmers and agrarian reformers. The old frontier ideas



1. PATENT ENDLESS CHAIN HORSE POWER AND OVERSHOT THRESHER

and methods were subjected to the harsh tests of experimentation and comparison of the old with the new. The results were revolutionary in the long view, but the immediate gains were often discouragingly slow. Where the effects of new methods could be displayed to the sceptics, as in labor-saving machinery and animal breeding, the gains were greatest. Where they were less obvious, as in the more complex problems of soil depletion and the whole question of agricultural education, progress was slow.

An eagerness to experiment with machinery was in evidence long before the necessities of war made themselves felt. Reaping machines were particularly in demand, one observer reporting in July, 1850, that he had seen fifty or more on the wharf at Sandusky at one time, all for Ohio buyers.<sup>32</sup> This was but two years after McCormick had begun to turn out machines from his Chicago factory. Wheat drills were coming into general use, corn planters had appeared, mowing machines were being tested, steel plows were found everywhere, though rare before 1848,<sup>33</sup> while dozens of other inventions were being experimented with to reduce and to render more efficient the

<sup>32</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, VI (July 15, 1850), 217.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, VI (Oct. 1, 1850), 291-2; VIII (Mar. 1, 1852), 67; VIII (June 15, 1852), 185-6; XIII (Nov. 15, 1857), 340-1.

farmer's labor. Many of them were impracticable but they evidence the widespread interest felt in the farmer's problems.

Makers of agricultural machinery, especially reapers, mowers and plows, submitted their machines to competitive tests to determine their merits;<sup>34</sup> a trial of mowers and reapers at Springfield in 1852, under the auspices of the State Board of Agriculture, attracted 2,000 spectators, many from distant parts of the State. However, the progress of machinery, as applied to the farmer's needs, was limited by the type of motive power available. The steam engine, though being tested for plowing on the prairies of the West, was too cumbersome for most purposes on the average Ohio farm. Hand and horse or mule power were the rule, the use of steam the exception. The second phase of the machine age on the farm came when gasoline and electricity were made available.

Efforts to improve the breeds of domestic animals were characteristic of the new spirit among intelligent farmers. The herds of fine Shorthorn cattle in the Scioto Valley had already made "Scioto Beef" celebrated in the markets of the East. Importing companies were formed to send agents abroad for the purpose of buying pure-blooded European cattle and sheep. Their public sales were largely attended and the imported stock brought high prices. At a Clinton County sale one bull brought \$3700, sheep as high as \$120, and a female shepherd dog \$51.<sup>35</sup>

At the State and county fairs the exhibitions of live stock were the leading features. Fine horses were especially admired, so much so that "trials of speed" and "ladies' equestrianism" came in for criticism from the more strait-laced, the former as ill-disguised horse races, the latter as exhibitions of immodest females instead of spirited horses.<sup>36</sup> "There is a despotism of propriety, and nowhere else so despotic as in the quiet country," wrote the horse-loving editor of the *Ohio Cultivator*.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII (July 15, 1852), 209-11; IX (July 15, 1853), 216-7; XII (July 15, 1856), 216; XV (July 15, 1859), 228; *Ohio Farmer* (Cleveland), VIII (July 2, 1859), 210; VIII (July 16, 1859), 226.

<sup>35</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, X (Aug. 15, 1854), 249.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, XII (July 1, 1856), 205-6; XIII (Jan. 1, 1857), 5.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, XII (Sept. 15, 1856), 285.



Cattle breeding made special progress in these years. To the Shorthorn and Devon cattle of the 1830's and 1840's were added imported Herefords and Ayrshires, which became popular in the Western Reserve, where milkers were in demand.<sup>38</sup> The first Jerseys were imported by some Cincinnati citizens in 1865 but were not very numerous for some years. Holsteins were uncommon before 1872. At the State Fair in 1870 there were 160 entries of Shorthorns to 43 of three other breeds represented.

Early importations of Spanish and Saxony Merino sheep had given Ohio a few fine flocks, but their descendants had degenerated by 1850 until there was "scarcely a decent flock of sheep in the state."<sup>39</sup> Importations of Vermont Merinos began in the 1850's and that strain was soon most popular of all. Southdowns, Leicesters, and other English breeds were occasionally imported before 1850, but the day of the mutton sheep had not yet arrived. At the State Fair of 1865 there were 93 entries of Merinos to 71 of all the other breeds.<sup>40</sup> As long as wool prices held up, Merinos were popular. After 1872, when prices fell, mutton became increasingly an object of sheep raising.<sup>41</sup> Like their fellow Americans, Ohioans were slow in discovering the virtues of spring lamb and mutton.

The lowly swine of Ohio had been a strange mixture of breeds, but the crossing and selection of several strains had evolved in the Miami Valley the famous Poland China hogs, the most popular of breeds by 1850.<sup>42</sup> A careful process of cross breeding covering a number of years resulted in the Ohio Improved Chester Whites in the 1860's, the work of the Todd family of Wakeman, Huron County. This breed was most common in the Western Reserve. Berkshire and Suffolk hogs were being imported by the early 1850's and were soon well established.<sup>43</sup>

The 1850's were significant years in horse breeding. Occasional importations of blooded stallions had occurred earlier but the in-

<sup>38</sup> Burkett, *Ohio Agriculture*, 112-6.

<sup>39</sup> Lloyd, Falconer and Thorne, "Agriculture of Ohio," 112.

<sup>40</sup> Ohio State Board of Agriculture, *Annual Report*, 1865, Part II, 118-30.

<sup>41</sup> Burkett, *Ohio Agriculture*, 129-36.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-47.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-9.



roduction of a Morgan horse from Vermont in 1847 by the Ladds of Jefferson County led to further purchases and made the Morgan the most popular of Ohio's horses.<sup>44</sup> A number of importations of French and English stallions in the 1850's added Clydesdales, Percherons, Cleveland bays and French draft horses, and generally improved the horse stock of the State. The work of the Darby Plains Importing Company, organized at Milford Center, Union County, in 1857, was a notable example. The demand for fine harness and saddle horses amounted to a "passion," according to Col. Sullivan D. Harris, editor of the *Ohio Cultivator*, who wrote a history of horses in Ohio for Forester's *Horses and Horsemanship of America*.<sup>45</sup>

But the degree of progress attainable in agriculture was to be measured by the success with which new ideas could be disseminated among the masses of farmers. In solving this problem several agencies were at work. One of the most influential was the agricultural press. Before 1845 there was not a paper in the State devoted to the interests of agriculture. In that year M. B. Bateham began the publication of the *Ohio Cultivator* at Columbus. Within a few years it had developed a circulation of more than ten thousand and was so successful that by 1858 three other farm journals were being published in the State, while many Ohio farmers were also subscribers to national agricultural periodicals.

The rapid spread of agricultural fairs was another educational influence. The movement was spasmodic until 1845 when, under the stimulus of the *Ohio Cultivator*, a State convention of the friends of agriculture was held and the State Board of Agriculture organized. With legislative sanction and aid, county associations were formed, and by 1850 the State Fair had come into existence as well as some 35 county fairs.<sup>46</sup> By 1860 the number of the latter had grown to 76 while, in addition, 29 township and district societies were holding local fairs. The delegates of the county as-

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-104.

<sup>45</sup> Reprinted in *Ohio Cultivator*, XIII (Oct. 15, 1857), 306-8.

<sup>46</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 73; *Ohio Cultivator*, VI (Oct. 15, 1850), 313; XVI (Sept. 1, 1860), 265.

sociations, meeting at Columbus annually to elect the members of the State Board of Agriculture, constituted a kind of farmers' congress whose deliberations were of considerable weight among Ohio farmers and with the Ohio legislature. Such well known public figures as former Governor Allen Trimble, Samuel Medary and Dr. Norton S. Townshend served at different times as president of the State board. Furthermore, the annual reports of the board were substantial volumes containing, in addition to accounts of the State board and the local associations, essays and articles on a great variety of subjects of interest and value to farmers. Besides the State and county associations, special organizations of pomologists, beekeepers, sugar cane growers, wool growers and others were active. The Ohio Pomological Society, organized in 1847, boasted that it was the oldest of its kind in the Union. It became the Ohio State Horticultural Society in 1867.

The most intelligent and far-sighted friends of agriculture realized that the gospel of scientific farming could best be spread through the establishment of educational institutions to train the next generation of farmers. A state-supported agricultural college was the goal of the reformers, though there were enthusiasts, like Lucius A. Hine, who thought that every county should have its school and experimental farm. Attempts to interest farmers in agricultural education, however, were not encouraging to the reformers. "Book farming" was distrusted, and when the "Ohio Agricultural College," a privately supported enterprise, sponsored by Dr. Norton S. Townshend, opened its doors at Oberlin in 1854, it was coldly received and few students came. The editor of the *Ohio Cultivator*, who spent two days at Oberlin, was disappointed at the small attendance and the fact that most of the students were from other states. He thought that the price of the lectures, \$40 for the winter, was too high, though the faculty planned to give two winters' instruction for this fee.<sup>47</sup> The faculty consisted of Dr. James Dascomb, chemistry, Professor James H. Fairchild,

<sup>47</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, X (Dec. 15, 1854), 375; XI (Jan. 1, 1855), 8-9; XI (Oct. 15, 1855), 312, 318; XII (Oct. 15, 1856), 313.

natural philosophy, Dr. Norton S. Townshend, animal physiology, and Dr. John S. Newberry, geology, mineralogy, botany and related subjects. The college was removed to Cleveland the next year, but classes continued to be small and its income was insufficient for its maintenance, even though its teachers labored almost without compensation. This lack of support proved fatal and it was forced to discontinue in the third year of its existence.

Though its advocates had acclaimed the Oberlin experiment as the only one of its kind in the country, this was disputed by the proponents of an institution near Cincinnati known as Farmers' College, which had begun as an academy, had developed into a college in 1847, and in 1854 had 200 students. Freeman G. Cary was its guiding light. But its critics declared with a great deal of truth that none of its alumni were farmers and that it was hardly more than an academy for instruction in the common branches.<sup>48</sup>

The movement for a State-supported institution received an impetus in the latter part of the decade from the Morrill bill in Congress, providing for federal land grants for state agricultural colleges. Michigan established an agricultural school in 1857, New York and other states were taking similar measures<sup>49</sup> and the Ohio assembly was importuned to act. Governor Chase, ever alert to reform tendencies, recommended such an institution to the assembly in his message of 1858, but no action was taken by that body, and even a resolution favoring the granting of lands by Congress for agricultural colleges, after passing both houses, was reconsidered in the Senate and defeated.<sup>50</sup> The veto of the Morrill Agricultural College bill by President Buchanan in 1859 dashed the hopes of the progressives for federal aid and the new assembly in its first session in 1860 let the matter rest. Indeed, the *Ohio Cultivator* approved the presidential veto.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, X (Jan. 15, 1854), 17; XIV (Jan. 15, 1858), 24; XIV (Feb. 15, 1858), 52.

See also *The Cincinnati*, 1857-1860, a periodical published by the faculty.

<sup>49</sup> Earle D. Ross, "The 'Father' of the Land-Grant College," *Agricultural History*, XII (Baltimore, 1938), 167-8.

<sup>50</sup> *Ohio Farmer*, VII (Jan. 16, 1858), 20; VII (Apr. 10, 1858), 113; *Ohio Cultivator*, XIV (Apr. 1, 1858), 104.

<sup>51</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, XV (Apr. 15, 1859), 120-1; XV (May 1, 1859), 137.

With the Republicans in control of Congress after the outbreak of the Civil War, the reformers had their way and the famous Morrill bill became a law, Senator Wade piloting the measure through the upper house. Each State was to receive a grant of public lands (30,000 acres for each Senator and Representative) which was to be sold and the proceeds invested for the benefit of a college to teach the branches of learning related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, not however excluding other "scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics."<sup>52</sup> To each state legislature was left the problem of choosing the institution to receive the endowment, which could not be used for the erection or repair of buildings. Ohio's share amounted to 630,000 acres.

Governor David Tod, intent upon the problems of the great civil convulsion then raging, recommended to the assembly that the grant be accepted to establish an institution where "agriculture, the mechanic arts, and military tactics can be taught in harmony."<sup>53</sup> The State Board of Agriculture was favorable but the legislature postponed action, and not until the new assembly met in January, 1864, was a bill passed to accept the Federal subsidy. Columbus Delano of Knox County was its sponsor.

At the next session of the assembly, a bill was passed to sell the land scrip at not less than eighty cents an acre. Sales were slow and presently price restrictions had to be removed. The commissioners in charge ultimately realized \$342,450.80, a pitiful sum for such a magnificent endowment. Intent on the speedy establishment of an agricultural and mechanical college, neither legislature nor State officials had the foresight to see that the withholding of the land scrip from the market might have added millions to its endowment later as the lands increased in value.<sup>54</sup>

Two fundamental problems now had to be settled. First, should the funds be used to set up a new institution, or should they be given to one or more existing colleges? Second, should the type

<sup>52</sup> Thomas C. Mendenhall, ed., *History of the Ohio State University* (Columbus, 1920), I, 3.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-13.



of education to be offered emphasize training in agriculture and the mechanic arts as the fundamental purpose, with the classical and scientific studies distinctly subordinate, or should it be more broadly liberal with all the branches of higher education made available to its students? Generally, the advocates of a technical and practical education favored a new institution, feeling, as did the State Board of Agriculture, that no Ohio college was fitted to carry out this new departure. Many who objected to a school purely for farmers and mechanics also felt much the same way. Ralph Leete of Ironton, one of southern Ohio's ablest attorneys, declared bluntly: "There are no intellects of high order in her [Ohio's] numerous colleges nor in any manner connected with her educational system. . . . Most of the professors of our literary institutions are bitter sectaries and not infrequently narrow-minded country politicians." <sup>55</sup>

General James M. Comly, intimate friend of Governor Rutherford B. Hayes and editor of the *Ohio State Journal*, at that time one of the more liberal Republican papers, slashed out at the "narrow gauge" people "who look upon the college chiefly as a means for the development of bull calves." Comly wanted the foundations laid for a great State university which could offer a comprehensive education and broad culture to its students. "The lawyer who knows nothing but law, the physician who knows nothing but medicine, and the farmer who knows nothing but agriculture are on a par with each other. They are all alike starved and indigent in the requirements of true culture." <sup>56</sup>

John H. Klippart, Norton S. Townshend and other agricultural reformers fought to make the prospective institution primarily a farmers' college with the elements of a classical education largely omitted from its curriculum. Klippart, who had investigated agricultural education in Europe and was much influenced by the views of the German authority, Baron Justus von Leibig, did not advocate a narrowly practical training for farmers but favored a

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, introduction, x.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

solid groundwork of sciences—geology, chemistry, botany, physiology—as a fundamental requisite. He believed courses of two, three and four years should be offered, and that an experiment station should be an integral part of the institution. He objected to the establishment of an ordinary literary or classical college of the prevailing type with the mere addition of an agricultural department, believing that the general education should come in the preparatory schools, before the student entered upon his scientific and technical training.<sup>57</sup>

Some there were who ridiculed the whole idea of a college for farmers and mechanics; others, including many farmers, were apathetic or doubtful. Such sentiments, plus the division of opinion among the reformers, help explain the long delays that ensued before final action was taken. The land scrip was sold in 1865. The act creating the new institution was not passed until March 22, 1870. Efforts of several existing institutions to secure the endowment, and competing offers of lands and money from various places eager for the honor of becoming the home of the college produced such differences of opinion in the legislature that nothing was accomplished until the session of 1870. Finally, two fundamental acts were passed: one investing the endowment in the irreducible debt of the State, which meant that it would draw interest at six per cent; the other, introduced by Reuben P. Cannon of Portage County, organizing the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College and making it the duty of its board of trustees to locate the institution and prescribe its curriculum.<sup>58</sup>

The nineteen members of the board, appointed by Governor Hayes, one from each congressional district, constituted an exceptionally able group with Valentine B. Horton of Pomeroy as president. A sharp struggle ended in the selection of the Neil farm, two miles north of Columbus, on the Worthington Pike, for the location of the college.<sup>59</sup> A fine spring of clear water and an acces-

<sup>57</sup> J. H. Klippart, "Agricultural Education in Europe," State Board of Agriculture, *Annual Report, 1865*, Part II, 11-50. Part I is a detailed account of his trip.

<sup>58</sup> Mendenhall, *Ohio State University*, I, 20-2.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-5.

sible site not too near the distractions of the capital were factors in determining the choice. The board also agreed to plan for a broad system of education as advocated by Horton, Joseph Sullivant of Columbus, Judge Thomas C. Jones of Delaware and Ralph Leete of Ironton. The "narrow-gauge" group made one last effort when professorships were being created in January, 1873. Dr. Townshend proposed to drop the chairs of English language and literature and of ancient and modern languages. His motion was defeated, eight to seven, and the foundations laid for a genuine state university.<sup>60</sup>

Under the able presidency of Dr. Edward Orton, who had been the head of Antioch College, the new institution opened its doors on September 17, 1873, with seventeen students on hand and a single, partly finished building to provide lecture rooms, laboratories and living quarters for students and faculty. The college in the cow pasture—Ohio State University—at long last began to function.<sup>61</sup>

Among the leaders in the movement for agricultural progress no one was more active than Dr. Norton S. Townshend of Lorain County.<sup>62</sup> Born in England in 1815, he came with his parents to Avon, Lorain County, in 1830. After studying medicine at Cincinnati Medical College and at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, he spent a year abroad, returning to Ohio to practice in 1841. He acquired a reputation as an antislavery leader and was elected to the assembly from Lorain County in 1848. His vote in the House, with that of Morse, Free Soiler from Lake County, elected Salmon P. Chase to the United States Senate in 1849. Dr. Townshend later served one term in Congress as a Free Soil Democrat and was chosen to the State senate in 1853. In the later fifties, however, he became more and more interested in scientific agriculture, abandoned medicine and politics for farming and served on the faculty of the short-lived Ohio Agricultural College, mentioned earlier. He was elected a member of the State Board of Agriculture and became its president in 1859. His influence was always on the

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-7.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-9.

side of the advocates of agricultural education, and in the later years of his life he had the proud distinction of serving both as trustee and faculty member of that State agricultural college that he had labored so hard to establish.

Thomas Brown, editor of the *Ohio Farmer*,<sup>63</sup> who had served as secretary of the ill-fated Oberlin venture in agricultural education, was another progressive who, through the columns of his influential weekly, tried to stir the farmers of Ohio from their apathy and conservatism. Another active worker was John H. Klippart,<sup>64</sup> for many years secretary of the State Board of Agriculture, investigator and writer and earnest advocate of scientific agriculture. The reports of the State board, which he edited from 1857 to 1877, are a monument to his industry and learning. M. B. Bateham, editor of the *Ohio Cultivator* to 1855, was an important influence for progress in the earlier part of the decade but his editorial successor, Col. S. D. Harris, while heartily in favor of improving the condition of agriculture, was sceptical of the value of higher education in that field and took a reactionary position in the years 1858-1860.<sup>65</sup>

Despite all the indications of ferment and progress in the middle years of the century, one is forced to conclude that the majority of farmers seemed indifferent or hostile to change. The editor of the *Ohio Cultivator* complained in 1854 that more than nine-tenths of the farmers were not readers of any agricultural paper and would not cooperate effectively in sustaining the local agricultural societies.<sup>66</sup> In 1859 one of the best friends of the farmer, lamenting his excessive conservatism, charged that almost all the efforts at agricultural improvement had been commenced by men in other pursuits and had been often prosecuted without the sympathy or cooperation of farmers. He cited the county fairs, the agricultural newspapers and the movement for a farmers' college as illustrations.<sup>67</sup> He might have used the failure of the geological survey bill

<sup>63</sup> His best biography is the editorial page of the *Ohio Farmer* in these years.

<sup>64</sup> Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1928-1937), X, 445.

<sup>65</sup> See columns of the *Ohio Cultivator*.

<sup>66</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, X (Dec. 15, 1854), 374.

<sup>67</sup> *Ohio Farmer*, VIII (Apr. 9, 1859), 116.



in the closing years of the fifties as a further illustration, for that measure, advocated by Dr. Townshend, the State Board of Agriculture, the *Ohio Farmer*, Governors Chase and Dennison, and other prominent figures, was lost chiefly because farmers were indifferent or hostile. The expense involved and the feeling that the bill was of little practical value explain their attitude. The repeal of the school library tax in 1860 was largely at the behest of the farmer element, sceptical of the benefits and aggrieved over tax burdens.

Dr. Townshend, writing in 1871 on the future of Ohio agriculture, found fault with the farmers' backwardness in practical matters. "How often," he asked, "do we see good business men, who have been successful as merchants or bankers, and, although unskillful, perhaps in some of the details of farming, yet, on account of good business management, make larger profits from land than our best farmers?"<sup>68</sup> He wanted the farmer to improve his methods and apply business principles to the farm.

Local farmers' clubs of a social and educational character were being organized in the early fifties in many localities but the movement seemed to lose its force within a short time. Not until the Grange became active in the 1870's was much done in this direction. The rural church was the chief center of social life and played a vitally important role. But it had its shortcomings. Dr. Townshend's comments illustrate some of these:

"Visit the centers of our rural towns and you will see two, three or more spacious churches; but often no high-school or music hall, or any lecture room where the people can assemble. If the number of churches in country places could be accepted in evidence of the purity and depth of religious feeling we ought all to rejoice; but too often it seems a proof of the narrowness and exclusiveness of men whose life is practically to secure the ascendancy of their own tweedledee over the tweedledum of their neighbors."<sup>69</sup>

The monotony of farm life even extended to the diet of so many

<sup>68</sup> Ohio State Board of Agriculture, *Annual Report, 1871* (Columbus, 1872), 60.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

rural residents. One observer commented on the fact that through the spring and early summer, salt pork, bread, perhaps hominy and beans, were almost the only articles on many farmers' tables. In the winter, potatoes and the meat from two or three hogs were their chief reliance. Nor, even in summer, was the food as varied as it might have been, since many farmers did not bother to raise vegetables for their own consumption, excepting, of course, the all-important potato.<sup>70</sup> The city dweller, equally unaware of vitamins, at least had a wider choice for his table.

The homes of the poorer classes in the rural districts were but little better than the accommodations afforded their domestic animals. A single room furnished sleeping quarters for a whole family as well as for boarders and visitors. One "district school ma'am" in a poor district reported that in her experience of "boarding round," only on one occasion had she had a room in which none but those of her own sex slept; other teachers told similar stories. The "editress" of the ladies' department of the *Ohio Cultivator*, an ardent advocate of frequent baths, had to admit that under these circumstances concessions would have to be made.<sup>71</sup>

The contribution of the county fair to the social life of the farmer was a notable one. Here he could mingle with his neighbors and comment on the thoroughbred horses, the fat cattle and hogs, the fine displays of wool, grain, vegetables and fruit, and the new machinery, while his wife examined the best in the culinary art, the more prized productions of the needle, and exhibits of the finer arts, ranging all the way from oil paintings to artificial flowers. The popularity of the trials of speed for horses and the ladies' equestrian exhibitions indicate that the more entertaining aspects had many farmer devotees. The ubiquitous side-shows and swings were a problem and a puzzle to the county agricultural societies.<sup>72</sup> Some excluded them from the fair grounds and even from its vi-

<sup>70</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, X (Sept. 1, 1854), 268-9; *Cincinnati Commercial*, Nov. 7, 1860.

<sup>71</sup> XI (Feb. 15, 1855), 60.

<sup>72</sup> Ohio State Board of Agriculture, *Annual Report*, 1865, Part II, 57-63, for a discussion of the problem. See also Robert L. Jones, "A History of Local Agricultural Societies in Ohio to 1865," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, LII (1913), 120-40.

cinity; others with more worldly-mindedness used them to draw crowds. Monkeys, fat women, midgets, snakes and swings made a festive occasion of what was ostensibly an educational exposition.

Due caution must be used in generalizing about rural life, for Ohio in mid-century was a State of rather striking diversity. The northwest was rapidly emerging from the pioneer stage but still reflected the former frontier conditions. The Black Swamp was only partially conquered. The hilly and broken southeastern counties, except for certain favored spots, were poorly adapted to successful farming, and consequently, though long settled, were more backward and unprogressive than any other part of the State.

On the other hand, the northeast and the Scioto and Miami valleys of the south and southwest showed the greatest advances, though quite dissimilar in character. Two examples may be cited. One might expect to find among the Yankees of the Western Reserve some of the most progressive farmers in the State. No part of Ohio appeared so prosperous. Small farms, well tilled, and neat and attractive farmhouses were evidences to the casual observer of Yankee thrift and energy.<sup>73</sup> One keen critic, however, charged that the Reserve farmers, in their desire to produce everything needed for their own consumption, attempted to grow corn and wheat even where it would result in small yields per acre instead of putting the land in grass for their cattle and dairy cows—the real source of their wealth.<sup>74</sup> This criticism was less applicable after the war than before. Despite their shrewdness, economy and hard work, the Yankee farmers seemed to be making less money than the more careless and easy-going agriculturists of the south.

In the middle Scioto Valley, to choose an example from the south, were to be found illustrations of the worst and the best in Ohio agriculture. The casual observer was appalled at the carelessness and neglect so often in evidence. Ugly unpainted houses, treeless and unkempt yards, pigs and chickens roaming around the doors, fences sadly in need of repair, outbuildings conspicuous

<sup>73</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, VI (Aug. 15, 1850), 243

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII (Aug. 1, 1857), 232.

by their absence, these and other signs proclaimed the existence of tenantry on a large scale, a growing evil in this fertile region.<sup>75</sup> They also seemed to proclaim to the thrifty Yankee the Virginia origin of a large part of the population. Yet among the great land-owners farming was conducted on a vaster scale and with larger profits than anywhere else in the State. Though often wasteful in their methods and showing a tendency to acquire more land than they could farm successfully, these cattle kings knew the fundamentals of stock breeding and the progeny of their imported English cattle were unsurpassed in the West.<sup>76</sup> Six counties on, or west of, the Scioto River had 16.4 per cent of the total Shorthorn bulls in the United States during the period 1852-1856. The Renicks, the Worthingtons, the Sullivants and other Scioto Valley farmers typified the march of progress.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII (June 15, 1852), 185-6; XIII (Feb. 1, 1857), 54.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, XII (Jan. 15, 1856), 21; XII (Nov. 1, 1856), 32; IX (Feb. 1, 1853), 34-5; Charles T. Leavitt, "Improving Cattle Breeds in the United States," *Agricultural History*, VII (1933), 51-67.



# The Revolution in Transportation

OHIO'S inland waterway system, so significant a factor in the economic development of the thirties and forties, ended its golden age rather abruptly in the decade of the fifties.<sup>1</sup> With the completion of the Miami and Erie Canal in 1845, Ohio possessed two great lines of water transportation connecting Lake Erie and the Ohio River, the older Ohio Canal extending from Cleveland to Portsmouth, the Miami and Erie from Toledo to Cincinnati. In addition, a number of branch canals had been built, making a total of 813.75 miles under State control.<sup>2</sup> The rapid development of agriculture and industry and the great increase in population between 1830 and 1850 were due in no small degree to the transportation facilities afforded by the canals. The northwestern counties, wooded, swampy and isolated, were almost unsettled until the 1840's, and their rapid growth around 1850 was attributed chiefly to the opening of the Miami and Erie Canal in 1845. The total net earnings of the entire system passed the half million mark in 1847, the highest ever attained, while total gross receipts were almost \$800,000 in 1851, another record breaker.<sup>3</sup>

This, however, was the climax. From 1851 to 1856 the decline in business was so rapid that in the latter year receipts for the first time fell below expenditures. By 1860 the business of the canals was but one-third that of 1851 while the deficit had become an annual occurrence. The chief factor was the tremendous growth of railroads, referred to elsewhere in this chapter. The canals found it

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the history of the canals and other internal improvements in these years is based upon Ernest L. Bogart, *Internal Improvements and State Debt in Ohio* (New York, 1924), and C. C. Huntington and C. P. McClelland, *History of the Ohio Canals* (Columbus, 1905). Both are written from official records and documents.

<sup>2</sup> Privately owned branches raised the total to 1,000.75 miles.

<sup>3</sup> Tables in Bogart, *Internal Improvements*, 146-9.

impossible to compete profitably with this new method of transportation. Despite repeated reductions in tolls by the Board of Public Works, the speedier carriage by the railroads, the unscrupulous character of their competition and the seasonal operation of the canals drew even a large part of the bulky products to them. An attempt by the General Assembly in 1852 to regulate rates of railroads intersecting canals and to forbid railroad bridges from interfering with canal traffic went unenforced so far as rates were concerned.

The successful operation of the canals was further impeded by political considerations. The three members of the Board of Public Works, chosen by popular vote, appointed the numerous lock tenders, collectors of tolls and other officials, and provided for the repairs necessary to keep the waterways in operation. Thus partisanship played a large part in such matters, and inefficiency and corruption were the consequences. In 1855 the Democratic Board of Public Works inaugurated a reform by having private contractors make the repairs under a system of competitive bidding. This was done supposedly in the interests of efficiency, but a Republican legislative committee reported in 1857 that the successful contractors were not the lowest bidders and that gross favoritism had been shown by the board in making the leases.<sup>4</sup> The question thus became a political football and two assemblies wrangled over it.

The Republican legislature in 1857 virtually repudiated the contracts but permitted the contractors, if dissatisfied with the terms offered by the State, to carry the matter into the courts.<sup>5</sup> The succeeding Democratic assembly also struggled with the canal contracts question. In general, the party favored a restoration of the contracts but, after much wrangling at the 1859 session, failed to pass such a bill largely because of the hostility of Senator Newton D. Schleich, chairman of the committee on public works.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile the contractors had carried the matter into the courts for solution.

<sup>4</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Jan.-Mar., 1857.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter XI.

<sup>6</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Jan.-Apr., 1859.

In April, 1858, the State supreme court ruled that the original contracts were null and void on the ground, overlooked hitherto, that they created a larger State debt than the Constitution of 1851 permitted. In the absence of any further action by the legislature the Board of Public Works supervised the repairs itself as before 1855.

A growing sentiment was evident in the second half of the decade in favor of relieving the State of its control of the whole canal system. This was in line with the prevailing political philosophy of divorcing the State from all economic activities and confining its functions to the narrowest possible limits. But more directly was it due to the feeling that the canal system under political management could not compete with the railroads under private control. It was not a party issue, for both parties were tending in the same direction. As early as 1852 the matter had been discussed in the senate but no action taken. Governor Medill in his last message advocated the sale of all stock owned by the State in canals, turnpikes and railroads, while Governor Chase, following him, advised the sale of the State canals themselves. The deficit of 1856 brought matters to a head but the bill to sell the public works failed to secure a constitutional majority in the house.<sup>7</sup> A convention of business men interested in securing lower tolls on the canals had resolved against a sale,<sup>8</sup> while many who would have favored a lease were opposed to an outright sale.

The Assembly of 1858-1859 at its second session finally passed a measure to lease the canal system in three sections to the highest bidders for five years. Politics entered into the question to such an extent that the vote on the bill was almost strictly partisan, Democrats for, Republicans against.<sup>9</sup> The latter were not opposed to the leasing principle but to the character of the particular measure. When bids were asked for by the Board of Public Works, no bidders appeared. Republicans attributed this to the stringent provisions

<sup>7</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Apr. 16, 1857.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 27, 1857.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 7, 8, 9, 1859.

of the law, Democrats to the manner in which the Board of Public Works had carried it out.<sup>10</sup>

The continuance of the deficit under State management led to increasing pressure, especially strong from the counties not benefited by the canals, for their transfer to private hands. The *Cadiz Republican* declared that if the canals could not be sold they should be given away.<sup>11</sup> Governor Dennison was cautiously non-committal but seemed to lean somewhat toward private control in his second message. The Assembly of 1860-1861 could reach no satisfactory conclusion over the problem of a lease in its first session, but in 1861 finally passed a measure to lease the public works for ten years to the highest bidder.<sup>12</sup> This measure, less stringent than that of 1859, produced two bids, probably collusive, the successful one agreeing to pay the State \$20,075 a year for ten years.<sup>13</sup>

The terms seemed to take reasonably adequate care of the interests of the State. The lessees were to keep the canals in good repair and to pay the State for its personal property on the public works. This was later appraised at \$14,173.64. Inspection by the Board of Public Works at frequent intervals was provided, and the maximum tolls were fixed at the level of 1858.

A joint resolution of April 11, 1867, extended the lease ten years beyond June 1, 1871, though the lessees returned the public works to the State in 1877.<sup>14</sup> That the holders must have made a profit in the first period of their contract seems obvious or they would not have agreed to its continuance. Whether this was at the expense of proper maintenance of the canals has been disputed. The reports of the Board of Public Works were uniformly favorable to the lessees, possibly because it was not eager to assume the responsibility for the upkeep. A Democratic house committee reported in 1875 that the canals had depreciated badly since 1861, but this was discounted as the work of a partisan and pro-railroad body.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Aug. 17, 1859; *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Aug. 17, 1859.

<sup>11</sup> Feb. 8, 1860.

<sup>12</sup> *Ohio Laws*, LVIII (1861), 117-22.

<sup>13</sup> Bogart, *Internal Improvements*, 110.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-5.



The period from 1850 to 1870 marked a sharp reaction against the policy of the preceding decades toward internal improvements. The Constitution of 1851 limited the State debt, except for defense purposes, to \$750,000 and forbade the State to loan its credit to or buy stock in any corporation, or to authorize any local unit of government to do likewise. No longer was State aid to play a part in solving transportation problems by assisting private enterprises. In keeping with this view the State began to divest itself of stock in canals, turnpikes and railroads.<sup>15</sup> Ohio's share of the National Highway was leased in 1854 to a private corporation, which soon returned it to the State. Tolls were inadequate to return a profit, and when the last bonds incurred from its construction were paid off, the road was turned over to the cities, villages and counties through which it passed (1873-1876). Its day as a through highway ended with the appearance of the trunk line railroads, and not until the twentieth century was it to become again a mighty artery of inland transportation.

A second important highway, the Western Reserve and Maumee Road, was leased along with the canals in 1861, but the new lease of 1867 did not include it. The next year it was turned over to the counties through which it ran. In 1865 the State began to sell its turnpike and railroad stock, receiving \$179,257 for an investment of \$1,525,319.

Apart from the leases of the canal system, the State inaugurated a policy of selling or abandoning unprofitable branch canals, canal lands and even the terminals of the two main canals in Cincinnati (1863), Toledo (1864) and Cleveland (1872). The railroads, in almost every case, were the gainers, as they thereby acquired valuable rights of way and terminal facilities. While the worst features of this mistaken policy appeared in the seventies and eighties, it was clearly under way in the period covered by this volume.

While the railroads were making the canals and main turnpikes obsolete, the natural waterways, particularly the Ohio River, were showing far greater powers of resistance to the iron horse. The river suffered almost as much as the canals in the later fifties but its recu-

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-27; Huntington and McClelland, *Ohio Canals*, 48-9.

perative powers proved to be far greater. Unlike the artificial waterways, "Ol' Man River" kept rolling right along with Nature looking after its maintenance, sometimes in niggardly fashion, again with excessive prodigality, but always there was a river.

The early railroads contributed to the crowded glory of the Ohio, teeming with craft of every description. Local lines brought business to the river, and the great eastern roads, reaching the upper Ohio, supplied freight and passengers bound for the more distant West.<sup>16</sup> But the rail lines soon appeared in their true colors as competitors, rather than feeders, of river traffic. The business of carrying passengers declined rapidly. In 1854 over three hundred different packets touched at Cincinnati, with total arrivals and departures averaging more than twenty daily. But travelers were soon preferring "the jolting car to the elegantly fitted-out steamer," and by 1857 most of the packets had fled down the Mississippi or up the Missouri or other branches of the Father of Waters to escape the spreading blight of the railroad. The Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, when opened in 1855, cut the distance between Cincinnati and St. Louis in half and one could travel all the way from Cincinnati to Pittsburgh by rail as early as 1853.

In the 1850's, ice and low water seemed worse than usual, hampering navigation for long periods. Meanwhile the railroad benefited. Boiler explosions and other hazards of steamboating were either becoming worse or received more attention from a railroad-inspired press to frighten passengers into using the "steam cars." With the Panic of 1857 bringing heavy losses and even bankruptcies to many rivermen, the golden age of the Ohio seemed definitely over.

Yet heavy freight continued to choose the river over the railroads, where possible. Railroad iron, farm products, agricultural implements, heavy merchandise, and from the South much coffee, salt, sugar and molasses, and cotton were carried by the river.<sup>17</sup> If New Orleans was losing its importance as the outlet and port of entry

<sup>16</sup> Charles H. Ambler, *A History of Transportation in the Ohio Valley* (Glendale, Cal., 1932), 185-209, for the conflict of railroad and river.

<sup>17</sup> Albert L. Kohlmeier, *The Old Northwest as the Keystone of the Arch of American Federal Union* (Bloomington, Ind., 1938), 208, 213.

of the West, southern business was not declining but was itself absorbing the western surplus, once exported out of New Orleans to Atlantic ports. This fact made the Ohio-Mississippi water route, the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers and the railroads leading southward, of major importance to the Ohio Valley. If Cincinnati was less dependent on the lower Mississippi, she was still the industrial center for a great expanse of southern territory, for which the Ohio River was the great artery. Many of the smaller river towns had no other outlet. The hills of southern Ohio offered difficult problems for railroad builders and the poorer sections offered slight prospects of business for rail lines compared with other parts of the State. Much local business had to go by way of the river.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, river business was temporarily paralyzed. Most rivermen preferred to lie by until the situation was cleared up, but the military found a considerable use for steamboats as transports and also constructed a river navy that covered itself with glory. By the close of the war boatyards at Cincinnati had built or equipped fifty-six gunboats for the Federal Government.<sup>18</sup>

With cotton pouring northward, after the opening of the Mississippi, war prosperity came to the Ohio River.<sup>19</sup> The coal trade also prospered from war-time demands, "model barges" appeared, and new steamboats were built at a greater rate in 1864-1865 than ever before. Demobilization of the armies provided use for many boats, but for a time after the war, the river interests suffered from a surplus tonnage. But soon they were sharing in the great period of prosperity that lasted to 1873. Expanding industry and agriculture put new demands upon transportation facilities.<sup>20</sup> Iron ore, railroad iron, salt, farm implements, oil, industrial products, southern plantation products, as of old, and most important of all, enormous quantities of coal from the mineral regions of the Ohio Valley gave the Ohio River a second, if more prosaic, golden age. Marietta, Pomeroy, Portsmouth and Ironton were still river, rather than

<sup>18</sup> Ambler, *Transportation in the Ohio Valley*, 256.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 259-60.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 265 ff.

railroad, towns, while Cincinnati was only partly divorced from its dependence on the Ohio.<sup>21</sup>

On May 8, 1850, the *Cincinnati Gazette* printed a map of Ohio's railroads. A little over two months earlier it had recorded the arrival of the first train from Columbus and had described an elaborate reception for the legislature, which had been brought to Cincinnati for a week-end free excursion.<sup>22</sup> The map tells the story of Ohio's railroads better than any statistics of mileage. One could travel by rail from Sandusky to Cincinnati via Xenia, from Columbus to the Queen City also through Xenia, from Sandusky to Mansfield, and from Toledo over into Michigan. That was all. There was much construction going on and more miles of road were being surveyed, but actual travel was limited to the routes mentioned.

But progress was rapid. The *Cleveland Herald* reported on June 12 that Alfred Kelley, president of the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad, had returned from England where he had purchased iron for the entire road in the form of heavy "T" rails. Cleveland at that time had no rail connections with any important city, east, south or west. Yet the following year Pittsburgh and Cincinnati were reached, and in February, 1853, the *Herald* was boasting that Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Richmond (Va.), Wilmington (N.C.), Chicago and Rockford (Ill.) were accessible by railroad from the Forest City, and that St. Louis, the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico would soon be reached.<sup>23</sup> The trip from Cleveland to Columbus, by stage requiring the better part of two days, could now be made in five hours at a cost of \$4. One could go to Buffalo in eight hours for \$1 more, while New York City was but twenty-four hours distant, if one left Cleveland at 8 A.M. and possessed the necessary \$10. The road-beds were rough, the cars jolted, the engines vomited smoke and cinders upon the poorly protected passengers, but speed made up for these minor discomforts, and stage coach and canal packet were quickly made

<sup>21</sup> Industrial development has been covered in Chapter I.

<sup>22</sup> *Cincinnati Gazette*, Feb. 26, Mar. 4, 1850.

<sup>23</sup> Feb. 23, 1853.



# ATLANTIC & GREAT WESTERN R. R.

TWO LINES OF PULLMAN'S CELEBRATED  
**BROAD-GAUGE PALACE COACHES**

Leave CINCINNATI DAILY, morning and night, for

The only line selling tickets from Cincinnati to New York, good until used at reduced rates, which passengers can have if they check through. The rates of fares are less than by any other route. Passengers have the privilege of stopping over at Lake Champlain, or any other point, on regular New York tickets at reduced rates.



The only route by which passengers can go to New York without change on night express trains. On all other lines passengers have to change cars from 1 to 3 times, thereby increasing the risk, which inevitably attend a transfer from one train to another. Having purchased tickets by this line you have secured seats to New York.

Interior view of Drawing room and Sleeping Coach combined, in use on this line.

**WE** have the pleasure of informing the public of the completion of the Buffalo and Jamestown Railroad, between Jamestown, N. Y., and Buffalo, opening a new and pleasant route between the South and Niagara Falls, Buffalo, etc. Trains on the Buffalo and Jamestown Railroad will depart from, and arrive at, the A. & G. W. Depot, in Jamestown, and deliver and receive passengers at the Erie Railway Depot in Buffalo, thus avoiding an omnibus transfer between the South and Niagara Falls.

## SCENERY UNEQUALED! TRACK IN PERFECT ORDER!

Take the Broad Gauge for Comfort and a Certainty of making the Time Advertised.

**BUT ONE CHANGE** to SARATOGA, SHARON SPRINGS, WATKINS' GLEN, LONG BRANCH, NEWPORT, and all points in New England.

Through Tickets, desired locations in Through Coaches, and any information can be obtained at all ticket offices in the South and West.

**In Cincinnati, at No. 4 Burnet House, 115 Vine St., and at the Depot.**

**P. D. COOPER, Cleveland, O.**      **W. B. SHATTUCK, Cincinnati, O.**  
General Superintendent.      General Passenger and Ticket Agent.

obsolete. No revolutionary change has been so sudden and so complete.

Statistics can best tell in bare outline the story of twenty years of railroad building. Allowing for minor inaccuracies due to the difficulty in determining just when sections of railroads were regularly operating trains, the figures in the report of the State Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs for 1873 may be said to be substantially correct.<sup>24</sup> They show that while Ohio had only 299 miles of rail lines in operation in 1850, these jumped to 572 in 1851, and then to 890 in 1852, reaching 1,385 in 1853, certainly a remarkable increase. Then came a period of slower progress as financial difficulties affected many of the roads and the earlier optimism faded somewhat. By the close of 1857 the total mileage stood at 1,880. A sharp increase in 1858 raised this to 2,788 miles, after which came a period of relative stagnation with construction almost stopped by the Civil War. The post-war years saw but a slight pick-up. In 1870 the State had 3,376 miles as compared with 2,974 in 1860. The early seventies produced a revival of rail expansion and the total mileage reached 4,163 in 1873, besides 1,044 miles of sidings and other subsidiary trackage.

The figures reveal that Ohio built most of its important railroads in the 1850's, and that over half of the total in 1860 had been constructed by the close of 1854. The mortality of railroad corporations was very high in these years. Of 140 planned and incorporated, but 25 were actually built,<sup>25</sup> though these survivors provided the State with an adequate network of railroads, the southern and southeastern counties excepted.

The first roads were built with the idea of joining the Ohio River and Lake Erie, but by the middle of the 1850's east-and-west lines were the center of attention. Though the individual roads were comparatively short and were built largely with local capital, they were designed to connect with others built or projected to the east

<sup>24</sup> State Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs, *Seventh Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30, 1873* (Columbus, 1874), 4.

<sup>25</sup> William F. Gephart, *Transportation and Industrial Development in the Middle West* (New York, 1909), 161.

and west to provide through lines extending from the seaboard to the Mississippi or to Chicago and the lower lake ports.<sup>26</sup> By 1860 four lines, or alliances of lines, extended across the State with a network of connecting links, both subsidiary and independent.<sup>27</sup>

In the post-war years the most important new road was the Columbus and Hocking Valley, projected before the war but not built until the late 1860's. This tapped the mineral region of the southeast and became the great coal road of the State.

Cincinnati also advanced her transportation interests, though rather tardily, by the construction of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad.<sup>28</sup> Lacking a direct connection with the South after the war, the city sought to solve the problem by building her own rail line to Chattanooga, Tennessee. The State Constitution forbade municipalities to lend their credit to corporations, but this was cleverly evaded by an act of the assembly in 1869 authorizing cities of the first class (population over 150,000) to build their own railroads, if the voters approved. Cincinnatians voted favorably and a board of trustees was set up to supervise the project. Louisville, jealous of the Ohio metropolis, persuaded the Kentucky legislature to withhold its consent to a right of way and for a time the project was held up. But all difficulties were ironed out by 1873 and the next year construction had actually begun. A loosely drawn act to permit counties, townships and municipalities to undertake what Cincinnati was doing ran afoul of the constitutional prohibition, according to the supreme court, and was annulled. This was the "Boesel law."

The economic effects of this rapid spread of rail transportation were pronounced. Ohio was brought into closer commercial relationship with the East and the relative importance of the Ohio River outlet greatly reduced, a fact of considerable significance when the Civil War came. East-and-west railroads, however, did not actually divert the Ohio Valley trade northeastward before

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 161 ff.

<sup>27</sup> Kohlmeier, *Old Northwest*, 172 ff.

<sup>28</sup> J. H. Hollander, "The Cincinnati Southern Railway," *Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Science* (Baltimore), XII (1894), 7-96.

the war but rather stimulated the economic development of the lake region.<sup>29</sup> Live stock production was especially encouraged, as railroads could carry both animals and packed meats efficiently and the canals could not. New England thus was brought into the orbit of the upper Northwest.

In the Ohio Valley southern business continued to be of vital importance to 1861 but some of the surplus that earlier had gone to the seaport cities by way of New Orleans now went to Baltimore over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad or by river and rail directly to the heart of the South. New Orleans meant less to Ohio Valley business but the southern market was as important as ever. However, the eastern railroad trunk lines greatly relieved the situation when the war closed the Mississippi and other southern outlets.

Ohio's interior cities and towns were especially benefited from the spread of the rail network. Both industry and agriculture expanded with the opening of new markets. But the blessings were also spread to other states and Ohio farmers encountered the competition of the products of the rich prairie lands for seaboard business.<sup>30</sup> Low through rates lessened the disadvantages of distance. Industry suffered less from eastern competition, for Ohio possessed natural advantages for manufacturing and could hold its own in the southern and western markets.

Yet railroads were far from an unmixed blessing. The initial problem of financing, the poor returns to investors, the evils of both competition and consolidation and the clash of public interest and corporate greed involved in their operation raised questions which puzzled a generation reared on a philosophy of governmental non-interference with private business. Progress toward a solution was slow and halting and the gains were at first slight.

The connection of the State with railroad corporations antedated the Constitution of 1851, but since the provisions of that instrument furnished the basis for the legislation that followed, it may be taken as the starting point.

<sup>29</sup> Kohlmeier, *Old Northwest*, 210-5.

<sup>30</sup> Gephart, *Transportation and Industrial Development*, 66.



The Locofoco movement, the vital force in the demand for a constitutional convention, was able to write the chief features of its anti-corporation program in the new Constitution. Special charters of incorporation were forbidden to the assembly; corporations were required to be taxed on the same basis as individuals; the assembly was authorized to impose individual liability on all stockholders, if it so desired; and State and local governments could neither give aid nor lend their credit to any corporation.<sup>31</sup> Most of these provisions had little practical effect upon railroad development. The most serious was the prohibition of stock subscriptions or loans by county or municipal governments, a fruitful source of capital hitherto. But some of the more important roads had already benefited from such aid, and many counties and cities hastened to act before the new constitution became effective. After 1851 railroad building was left to private capital, most of it coming from the East. If one may accept the estimate of the Commissioner of Statistics in 1859, less than one-third of the railroad debts (bonds) were owned by Europeans.<sup>32</sup>

In the enthusiasm over the completion and successful operation of a number of railroads in the early fifties, the general public was easily convinced of both the utility and the profitableness of railroad building, and stock subscriptions were easy to obtain. There was little tendency to find fault with the new method of transportation and in only one instance did the assembly think it necessary to pass a restrictive law. This grew out of a controversy between the Board of Public Works and some of the railroads in 1852 over the latter's competition with the State canals. The Central Ohio Railroad in particular was charged with obstructing canal navigation with its bridges. When the board in drastic fashion ordered all such bridges removed by June 1, the railroad secured a temporary restraining order from the courts.<sup>33</sup> When the case was finally decided the injunction was lifted but the court held that railroads had the right, under proper restrictions, to cross

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>32</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1859, 41-3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Mar.-May, 1852.

canals and other State property. Meanwhile, the assembly had enacted a law to prevent the obstruction of canal navigation by railroad bridges, and, what was more far-reaching, to forbid railroads from charging a higher rate on the parts of their lines non-contiguous to the canals than was charged over the parts which intersected or reached the canals.<sup>34</sup> Rates were to be made public and were not to be changed except on ten days' notice. Another provision limited rates to three cents per mile for passengers and five cents per ton for freight for distances over thirty miles.<sup>35</sup> Fears for the business of the State canal system probably explain this legislation though here and there warning voices were being lifted against the misuse of power by certain railroad corporations.

No further attempts at railroad regulation were made for several years and the earlier laws were speedily forgotten. After the business crash of 1857 the enthusiasm for railroads evaporated somewhat and was replaced by a more critical tone in the press as the railroad situation came to be better understood. Several factors explain this revulsion of feeling. For one thing too much had been expected from rail transportation. Promoters had made extravagant promises of great economic benefits in their efforts to sell stock and communities had listened with too willing ears. Villages were to become great cities, and farmers, business men and laborers all were led to expect a profitable share in this expanding prosperity. But while gains were often real enough, they could not possibly satisfy such roseate expectations. Furthermore, the cost was always greater than estimated at first and sometimes roads were not completed, thus never reaching the neighborhoods of many of their stockholders. Profits also were greatly overestimated, less than seventeen per cent of the total mileage having actually paid dividends by 1868. Cities, counties and townships lost heavily on their railroad stock subscriptions.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Ohio Laws, *Acts*, 50th Assemb., 1852, L, 205-7.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 274-97.

<sup>36</sup> State Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs, *Annual Report*, 1870 (Columbus, 1871), II, 326. On incomplete figures, \$460,000 of stock paid dividends out of \$6,850,100 subscribed.

This growing distrust of railroad corporations was aggravated by certain practices of the roads.<sup>37</sup> Shippers began to discover that discriminations existed, that some were favored more than others, that rates were variable and not uniform and that competition, not distance, determined the rates between places. Local business seemed to be paying disproportionately high rates as compared with through traffic. Furthermore, the establishment of eastern and western connections by Ohio roads led either to consolidations or to understandings among the various links in a connected system whereby the more important eastern lines determined the rates and policies of the western roads. Because of the sharpness of competition, they made local business subserve the interests of through traffic. Rate agreements to reduce competition were equally bad from the shippers' point of view as they invariably meant increased rates. Reorganizations, stock manipulations and mismanagement added fuel to the popular distrust of rail interests.

Disillusionment over the railroad situation was reflected in widespread sentiment for some form of legislative action. Though the feeling was not organized and had no definite program, it did seize upon one outstanding grievance and demand redress. This was the apparent discrimination in rates between local and through traffic. Competition for the latter business together with the control over long distance rates exercised by the eastern roads from their strategic terminal position often compelled Ohio roads to carry through freight at a loss while revenues from local traffic made up the deficits. Petitions poured into the assembly in 1860 for the enactment of a pro-rata freight law that would equalize charges for through and local traffic. But the railroad lobby proved effective enough to defeat the proposal. A committee reported against a pro-rata law for a number of reasons, including fear of retaliation by other states against Ohio traffic, the fact that roads would be compelled to render services perhaps without adequate compensation in one case and for an extravagant amount in another, that such a law would prevent roads from developing the country through which

<sup>37</sup> Gephart, *Transportation and Industrial Development*, 168.

they passed, that it would be an impolitic interference with a private business and would destroy the little remaining confidence in railroad investments.<sup>38</sup> The legislature accepted this viewpoint, which was further re-enforced by the discovery that the almost forgotten railroad law of 1852 had provided for a virtual pro-rata system for rail lines intersecting canals but had never been enforced.

The railroads themselves felt the justice of much of the criticism against rate discriminations, but felt compelled to practice them in the interest of retaining the through traffic. The eastern roads, struggling with the problem of cut-throat competition with each other and with the water routes, tried agreements fixing uniform rates but they were soon violated.<sup>39</sup> Competition within Ohio also led to a rate agreement by the lake-to-river roads as early as 1853, but it did not last. Of the other attempts, the agreement in 1860 between the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton, and the Little Miami and its affiliates to fix rates and divide earnings on the business between Cincinnati and Columbus lasted for many years.

Apart from the pro-rata question, railroad critics were not very clear as to what should be done. Governor Chase in 1857 had suggested the possible establishment of a railway commission but no action resulted. His successor, Governor Dennison, a former railroad president, left the matter to the assembly. The next two governors, oddly enough, also railroad presidents, were too immersed in Civil War problems to give attention to other matters.

But the more pressing evils were attacked in an act, passed in 1861, which forbade trunk lines from making any rate discriminations between competing tributary lines or from diverting freight to another road than that designated by the shipper.<sup>40</sup> The tendencies of roads to make alliances and agreements and to consolidate with other roads explain this piece of legislation. It was, however, but another futile gesture which the rail lines could easily ignore. Probably many Ohioans accepted the view of the Cincinnati *Com-*

<sup>38</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Feb. 9, Mar. 6, 12, 1860.

<sup>39</sup> Kohlmeier, *Old Northwest*, 188-91.

<sup>40</sup> Ohio Laws, *Acts*, LIII (1861), 52.



*mercial* when it declared: "The people have never delegated to their representatives in the Legislature the power to prescribe what they shall eat and drink, how much they shall pay for it, or what price they shall pay for a ride for themselves, or for freight on their property."<sup>41</sup> The dead hand of frontier individualism still lay heavily on any reform movement that involved extension of State authority.

The boom in business caused by the war aided the railroads but also multiplied abuses, as the report of a senate investigating committee, appointed in 1866, revealed.<sup>42</sup> The old evils of discrimination between local and through business and preferential treatment of certain shippers were made worse by the competition for business after the war when the Federal Government no longer required so much of the rolling stock of leading railroads. Private shippers could not take up the slack. The war also stimulated the organization of "fast freight lines." Delays in shipment of goods and the difficulties in securing settlement of damage claims from the roads led to the formation of companies to handle both matters. The merchant, by giving his business to a freight line, would be assured of prompt shipment of his goods, supervised by its agents on different roads, and quick delivery at the terminal, together with a prompt settlement of any claims for losses. The roads were supposed to profit from the increased business.

The senate committee found these freight lines hardly more than additional drains upon the already too scanty incomes of Ohio roads. The Great Eastern Despatch, the only one of Ohio origin, included among its six shareholders the freight agent and the superintendent of the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad over which it operated. Much evidence of pecuniary interest of railroad officials in related lines of business was unearthed. For example, the station agent at New Lexington was buying and shipping coal over the Cincinnati and Zanesville road, while the

<sup>41</sup> Feb. 3, 1860.

<sup>42</sup> Ohio General Assembly, *Report of a Special Committee on Rail Roads and Telegraphs made to the Senate of Ohio* (Columbus, 1867), Feb. 1, 1877, pp. 1-197.

president and two directors had organized a coal company, though a lack of cars had already forced some of the mines to shut down. In another case a coal dealer, financed by a railroad superintendent, was given a virtual monopoly of the road's cars in a period of coal shortage. Station agents, in many instances, acted as employees of express companies or performed other duties inconsistent with the interests of their roads.

The committee recommended that no railroad should be permitted to charge more for a shorter distance than for a longer one, that rates should be made public and no reductions allowed to individuals, that preferences and undue advantages should be prohibited, that outside freight organizations should be discouraged or prohibited, that the office of State commissioner of railways and telegraphs should be created.

The legislation that resulted did not carry out all these proposals but it did result in one important advance. The office of State Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs was created with powers to investigate and report violations of laws, to initiate prosecutions through county prosecutors, to examine bridges, tracks and other structures for defects and to compel their repair, and to require reports from railroads, from which statistics were to be compiled and a report presented to the governor. The salary was fixed at \$4,000 with an allowance of \$1,200 for clerical assistance. Appointments were to run for two years.<sup>43</sup> George B. Wright was the first holder of the office. The annual reports of the commissioner constituted a valuable source of information about the State's rail transportation and led to improvements and reforms along several lines.

A survey of the legislation of the sixties and early seventies reveals acts dealing with insolvency, receiverships, bonded debts, damage claims, consolidations, union depots, bridge companies, safety regulations, fencing of tracks, construction of ditches and

<sup>43</sup> State Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs. *Annual Report for 1870* (Columbus, 1870), I, 104-6. This contains a compilation of railroad legislation from the beginning.

drains, heating of cars, unclaimed freight and a variety of minor problems. Neither legislature nor State commissioner was quite prepared to offer a solution for the awkward set of difficulties involved in the rate question. A brief but important act in 1871 forbade a greater charge for a short haul than for a longer one over the same road,<sup>44</sup> but its presence on the statute books was no indication of its effectiveness.

The taxation of railroad property was solved by a law passed in 1862, but the solution was far from ideal. Earlier acts (1852, 1859) had virtually allowed the roads to evaluate their own property and make their returns to the auditors of the counties through which they passed. The results were so bad that reform was imperative, and in 1862 a new tax system was set up.<sup>45</sup> By this law the auditors of the counties through which a road passed were to meet annually, examine reports of the road and any other relevant material, and apportion the value of the property among their respective counties. Fixed property and real estate were allotted to the county in which they lay; rolling stock, moneys and credits were apportioned according to mileage. The regular tax levies, by the uniform rule of the State Constitution, were then applied. A State Board of Equalization, composed of the State auditor, treasurer and attorney-general, was set up in 1865 to handle appeals and make revisions in appraisements. Under the new act, assessments in 1864 were \$41,814,000; in 1861 they had been \$11,718,000.

Experience showed that the law was defective in two important respects. In the first place the county auditors were far from being experts in evaluating railroad property and tended more and more to be ultra-conservative in their estimates. In the second place, the law ignored the earning power of railroads and taxed only their tangible assets. In the 1860's, when earnings were small for most roads, or non-existent, their physical property was a reasonably fair

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 1872, 473; *Cleveland Leader*, Mar. 8, 1872. The law was reenacted with a change of phraseology in 1872.

<sup>45</sup> Ernest L. Bogart, "Financial History of Ohio," *University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences* (Urbana-Champaign, Ill.), I (1912), 314-20; Latimer Johns, *The Taxation of Railroads in the State of Ohio*, Ohio State University Master's Thesis, 1912.

basis for taxation. But in later years, as earning power grew and the stocks of some roads became valuable investments, the old system proved unsatisfactory. Yet, for want of a better one, it lasted until 1910. It was the attempt of a generation accustomed to decentralized government and local autonomy, to deal with a problem that was not merely state-wide but inter-state in character.

While such economic matters as rates, discriminations, financial management, fast freight lines and related problems touched shippers and the business classes generally, the public of that day was more concerned over questions that directly affected the man who occasionally "rode the cars." One of these was "dead-head" tickets, or free passes. That individuals—and their families—having some direct connection with a railroad, such as officials, employees, attorneys and the like, should ride free was not objected to, but the list of others who enjoyed this privilege, according to the State railroad commissioner, was startling. Judges, members of Congress and the legislature, State officers, county officers and sometimes their deputies, editors and newspaper correspondents, keepers of public houses and their clerks, steamboat captains and clerks, many merchants and shippers, justices of the peace and constables in some cases, and "objects of charity" all enjoyed the privileged status of being "dead-heads."<sup>46</sup> It was estimated that if one-half of these free passengers had paid their fares in a year, the increase in revenues would have paid the roads' taxes. Yet railroad officials were themselves guilty of handing out passes lavishly as an easy way to silence complaints, cover up abuses or gain favors. Nothing was done to curb the evil.

More serious than the problem of "dead-heads" was the appalling increase in accidental deaths and injuries associated with rail transportation. The commissioner put it forcefully in his report for 1872: "When one class of corporations, in a regular business way, become the cause, direct or remote, of the annual death of nearly two hundred persons, and the wounding and maiming of three hundred and fifty in addition, at least it should arouse an

<sup>46</sup> State Commissioner, *Annual Report*, 1868, 26-7.



inquiry to learn if this frightful slaughter may not be greatly diminished.”<sup>47</sup>

In that year 12 passengers, 92 employees, and 90 others had been killed, an increase of 33 over the preceding year. These statistics were admittedly incomplete. Many of those killed were trespassers on the tracks, but the ninety-two dead employees tell another story. “Railroading” was apparently the State’s most hazardous occupation before the invention of modern safety appliances. Most of the deaths were callously attributed by rail officials to “want of caution” and the deceased’s family usually received little or nothing.

Inquests were not always held in cases of accidental deaths and the State commissioner was not always notified. A few hundred dollars to the family or friends when the road was at fault and the matter could be hushed up. Even if inquests were held, employees of the road were often the only witnesses and their testimony was made with their jobs at stake. From these and other practices it is small wonder that the railroads built up a large body of public ill will that made them in later years bear the first brunt of the onslaught against big business by an irate citizenry.

The animal slaughter rivalled that of the motor age. With the statistics very incomplete the total in 1869 was 2,149 cattle, horses, sheep and swine. Damage claims paid by the roads totalled \$42,626.83.<sup>48</sup> Some were killed while being transported, but inadequate fencing of tracks was more often the cause. Animals, like drunkards and boys, seemed to find a railroad an inviting highway, to be used at every opportunity. The “cow-catcher” on the engine did not belie its name. The results were ghastly.

With all its superiority over the old forms of travel the railroad fell far short of the comfort and convenience it was to achieve by the close of the century. Road-beds were rough; cars were drafty and poorly heated by wood stoves in winter, while in summer their open windows sucked in cinders and smoke; candles, and later oil

<sup>47</sup> Page 14.

<sup>48</sup> State Commissioner, *Annual Report, 1869*, 340.

lamps, supplied an insufficient light at night; time tables were changed without notice; clocks (before standard time was adopted) varied considerably from town to town; lack of uniformity in gauges required changes of cars from one road to another; connections were often bad; and long waits in uncomfortable depots were all too common.

This account of early rail lines may fittingly close with these three items from the diary of that experienced traveler, youthful Webb Hayes, son of Ohio's twenty-sixth governor.<sup>49</sup>

"July 8—1871 [at Fremont]

"This morning Fannie, Minnie and I started for Columbus at 8 o'clock. We changed cars at Monroeville and again at Shelby where we waited about three hours and took dinner. They had changed time so we got on a freight train at 1 o'clock and got to Columbus at 7½ o'clock.

\* \* \*

"July 12, 1871 [at Columbus]

"This morning mother, I, Fannie and Scott started for Elmwood. On the way down our hack broke down, at last we got started at 9 o'clock, changed cars at Lancaster and arrived at Circleville at about 12 o'clock.

\* \* \*

"Mon. July 31 [1871]

"We got up at 4½ o'clock this morning and started for Columbus and got to the depot at Circleville just as the train had started—stayed at Mr. Groce's till 4 P.M. and got home at 6 all hunky."

<sup>49</sup> Manuscript diary of Webb C. Hayes, 1871. The author is indebted to Dr. Curtis Garrison and Dr. James H. Rodabaugh of the Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont (O.), for the privilege of using this diary.

## CHAPTER V

# Banking and Financial Problems and Locofoco Radicalism

THE history of banking and currency in Ohio is a long and involved one. Excepting the vital question of markets, no problem in the early years of statehood had received more consideration or caused greater difficulties. The absence of specie, characteristic of frontier communities, and the dire need for capital to exploit natural resources and develop commerce and industry produced the usual consequences of "wildcat" banking and unregulated currency issues. Ohio, prior to 1840, had passed through two phases of bank expansion culminating in the panics and failures of 1818-1819 and of 1837. The fruit of these experiences had been a rather general distrust of the prevailing system of incorporating banks by special acts of the assembly. Log-rolling, wire-pulling and corruption occurred often and a lack of uniformity in the banking system had resulted. Incorporated in such fashion, the banks took refuge in their charters whenever legislative regulation threatened to limit their activities, and the courts generally upheld their contention that a charter was a contract and by the United States Constitution not subject to alteration by State law without the consent of the corporation.

The expiration of so many bank charters in the early 1840's brought the question to a head and made it the dominant political issue of the decade.<sup>1</sup> The Democrats, fresh from their national triumph over the United States Bank, were agreed in their hostility to the older system of monopolistic and comparatively unregulated State banks. Yet, while the radicals—the genuine "locofocos," as

<sup>1</sup> Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850*, Carl Wittke, ed., *History of the State of Ohio* (Columbus), III (1941), Chap. XV.

they were called—were ready to abolish all banks and commit the party to a hard money program, the moderates were inclined to favor a general banking law under which banks might be created subject to strict regulation. The Whigs, friends of the business classes and defenders of banks and a paper currency, charged their opponents with carrying on a war against capital and credit which would bring economic ruin in its wake.

The Kelley Banking Law of 1845, product of a Whig assembly, created two types of banks, a State bank, consisting only of branches, and a group of independent banks, both subject to careful regulation, especially for the security of their note issues.<sup>2</sup> The State was divided into districts and a limitation placed on the number of banks and the amount of capital in each. The Democratic principle of individual liability of stockholders was replaced by a very limited liability. There was no difficulty in inducing capitalists to organize banks under this law and within two years Ohio had 22 branches of the State bank and 9 independent banks besides 8 old banks chartered prior to the law of 1845.<sup>3</sup> For twenty years this law was the basis of Ohio's banking system and, on the whole, it functioned well.

Its economic utility, however, proved of little or no political value to the party that sponsored it. The radical Democrats, gaining control of their party in the latter half of the decade, waged an unrelenting war against the new system and attempted to throw on their Whig opponents the onus of being defenders of privileged monopolies. In this warfare they were aided by two factors not related to the banking question. The revolutionary movement in Europe in 1848 aroused a deep sympathy in the breasts of Americans and gave the democratic impulse renewed vigor. Ohio, still close to its frontier radicalism, showed the influence of this spirit. The times seemed to demand a radical reforming party and the term "radicalism" became the password to political success. A second

<sup>2</sup> C. C. Huntington, "A History of Banking and Currency in Ohio before the Civil War," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XXIV (1915), 423-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 431.



factor was the disastrous effect of the slavery issue upon the Whig party in 1848. The antislavery radicals, repudiating Zachary Taylor's nomination, joined the Free Soil movement and dealt the Whig organization in Ohio a blow from which it never recovered. Thus the party that had befriended banks and organized capital found itself in the early 1850's fighting under serious disadvantages despite its constructive record on the currency and banking question.

Control of the Constitutional Convention of 1850 was the great goal of the anti-bank radicals. Indeed, they were the backbone of the movement for a new fundamental law and it was due in no small part to their agitation that the question of calling a convention had been submitted to the voters in 1849 and had been approved.<sup>4</sup> Samuel Medary, through the columns of the *Ohio Statesman* and also by means of a special campaign weekly called the *New Constitution*, had led the way. In the struggle for the election of members of the convention in the spring of 1850, the Democratic party was on the offensive and with its radical element in command insisted on making the question of chartered monopolies the leading issue.

This Locofoco movement was not confined to an anti-bank program alone but included hostility to all forms of corporations, turn-pike, bridge, canal and railway companies as well as banks. Industrial corporations had not developed sufficiently to arouse much antagonism nor had they sought special favors from the assembly as had the others mentioned. Ohio's experience with companies chartered to build or operate internal improvements had been an unfortunate one.<sup>5</sup> Subscriptions and subsidies to these, together with the expense of the State's own canal and road systems, had placed a heavy burden on the treasury and consequently on the taxpayers. Investments in many of these resulted in heavy losses to the State, county and municipal governments as well as to many private individuals. Thus the Locofoco movement was in part a reaction against

<sup>4</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 478-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. IV.

the abuses resultant from a system of unregulated corporations, subsidized in many cases with public funds. As the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* put it, "It must not be left to the corrupt cupidity or caprice of future Legislatures to say whether this State shall be dotted over with Bank Corporations or cut up with Plank and Rail Road Corporations, with such tyrannical and exclusive privileges as shall make them masters, we their slaves."<sup>6</sup>

Other objections raised against the old Constitution found support outside Locofoco circles. The election of State administrative and judicial officials by the General Assembly had been working so badly that public opinion was demanding direct choice by the voters. Much of the time of the assembly had been taken up with the distribution of the spoils of office rather than with matters of legislation. The judicial system had been under fire for many years because of the delays and inefficiency incident to court proceedings. The supreme court was required by the Constitution to hold court in every county once a year, a nearly impossible task with eighty-five counties to be visited in 1849. With both supreme and common pleas judges elected by the assembly, spoils politics governed their selection and the choices were often bad. Popular election was the solution generally advocated. A more equitable system of taxation and some limitation on the creation of new counties were also regarded as desirable reforms.

Radicalism was, to a degree, a matter of geography. The strongest feelings against privileged monopolies was found in the north-western counties where frontier conditions still prevailed. Here, where banks were few and accumulated wealth scarce,<sup>7</sup> the democratic spirit of the pioneer ruled. Nowhere were there more radical papers than the *Toledo Republican*, edited by Charles Miller, and the *Kalida Venture* of James MacKenzie. In other rural sections Locofocoism also had a strong hold, though in parts of the long-settled hill regions of the south and southeast poverty and isolation seem to have bred mistrust of change. In the Western Reserve a

<sup>6</sup> Feb. 27, 1850.

<sup>7</sup> Eighteen northwestern counties had but three of the State's fifty-seven banks in 1848. Two of these were in Toledo. Auditor of State, *Annual Report*, 1848, 58.

general open-mindedness toward all manner of reforms and perhaps the hope that a Negro suffrage clause might be included in the new constitution led most of the New Englanders to favor the movement for a constitutional convention.

The city of Cincinnati was the exception to the rule that Locofoco tendencies thrived best in an agrarian environment. Here were congregated radicals of every species and from every clime. Among the working classes, largely of foreign birth, the spirit of democracy and hostility to special privilege was pronounced. The Constitutional Convention had no more unrelenting enemy of the money power than the German delegate from Hamilton County, Charles Reemelin.<sup>8</sup> The existence of a labor newspaper, the *Nonpareil*, for a few years around 1850 is proof of the class consciousness of the labor elements of Ohio's largest city. Not merely anti-bank ideas but all manner of democratic and radical reforms found a welcome here.

In their struggle to capture the Constitutional Convention the radical Democrats showed uncompromising anti-bank views. Dominating a Democratic State convention in January, 1850, they put through resolutions committing the party to an anti-bank, hard money position,<sup>9</sup> while in the campaign for the election of delegates to the constitution-making body the party press thundered against the domination of the State by banks and a moneyed aristocracy. Many Whigs would have preferred to avoid a partisan struggle, but in the face of this onslaught the Whig press generally came to the defense of the banks and attacked the ultra-ism of the Democrats. The Free Soilers of the Western Reserve were generally in favor of a free banking system and sometimes coalesced with one or the other of the major parties in support of this and "free suffrage," as well as other reforms.<sup>10</sup> In counties where they were especially strong, they ran independent candidates against a combi-

<sup>8</sup> For example, see J. V. Smith, reporter, *Report of the Debates and Proceedings of the Convention for the Revision of the Constitution of the State of Ohio, 1850-51* (Columbus, 1851), I, 79.

<sup>9</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Jan. 8, 9, 10, 1850.

<sup>10</sup> *Cleveland True Democrat* and *Ashtabula Sentinel*, March, 1850.

nation of the old parties. They were not particularly interested in the banking question, though tending toward a liberal viewpoint generally. The outcome of the campaign was a Democratic victory, that party having a clear majority over the combined opposition.<sup>11</sup>

Among the more important Democrats elected as delegates were William Medill of Fairfield County, soon to be governor and chosen president of the convention, Rufus P. Ranney of Trumbull, later supreme judge and Democratic candidate for governor in 1859, William Sawyer of Mercer, anti-bank leader, Charles Reemelin, radical German of Cincinnati, Samuel J. Kirkwood of Richland, later governor of Iowa and member of President Garfield's cabinet, and a group of able conservatives, who often voted with the Whigs: Judge Joseph R. Swan of Franklin County, Judge William Kennon of Belmont, William S. Groesbeck of Hamilton, Elijah Vance of Butler, and Edward Archbold of Monroe. The Whigs sent such significant figures as Henry Stanbery of Franklin County, attorney-general of the State and later of the United States under President Andrew Johnson, Valentine B. Horton of Meigs, later a member of Congress, former Governor Joseph Vance of Champaign, Peter Hitchcock of Geauga, veteran supreme judge, Samson Mason of Clark, ex-Congressman, and Reuben Hitchcock and S. J. Andrews of Cuyahoga, Whigs of Free Soil proclivities. In the little Free Soil group Dr. Norton S. Townshend of Lorain, member of the legislature, who had helped elect Chase to the United States Senate in the bitter struggle of 1849, was the best known. Of the seven claimed by the Free Soilers, four had been elected on coalition tickets.

The Constitutional Convention had hardly commenced its work before it became evident that the radicals would not have the complete control that the election had indicated. A little minority of conservative Democrats began to vote with the opposition against any measures of an extreme character. Siren voices from the Whig press spoke of the high character of the convention's personnel and

<sup>11</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Apr. 11, 1850, gave these totals: Democrats 64, Whigs 41, Free Soilers 3. The *Ohio State Journal*, Apr. 8, 1850, classified 58 as Democrats, 43 as Whigs and 7 as Free Soilers. The use of fusion tickets in some counties explains the different totals.



expressed confidence that partisan feelings would play no part in its work.<sup>12</sup> In alarm the radical organs, led by the *Ohio Statesman*, issued warnings against any compromise on the bank issue, while the Democratic State convention of July 4 reiterated in even stronger terms the hard money principles of its January predecessor.<sup>13</sup> The test seemed at hand for the conservatives when the currency committee of the constitutional convention brought in a report proposing that the legislature be forbidden to create banks or authorize the issue of paper money, that it should abolish all existing banks, and that the business of banking should be open to all under a general law, not including, however, the right to deal in or issue paper money.<sup>14</sup> Before this radical proposal could be considered, an outbreak of cholera at Columbus forced the adjournment of the convention until the following December.

The State election occurred in October and both Whigs and Democrats chose to regard it as a kind of referendum on the currency question for the benefit of the constitutional convention. Yet, despite the official attitude of the party, there were Democratic dissenters who refused to accept the anti-bank declarations at their face value, and even the *Statesman* admitted articles giving a milder interpretation to the currency committee's report than the facts seemed to warrant.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the Compromise of 1850 made the slavery question loom so large that it overshadowed the currency issue and left the popular will on the latter almost as difficult to determine as before. The outcome was a Democratic governor, Judge Reuben Wood, the first gubernatorial success of the party since 1842, but an assembly in which the Free Soilers held the balance of power.<sup>16</sup>

The Constitutional Convention reassembled at Cincinnati in December, unenlightened by the result of the election. At least the conservatives did not choose to regard the outcome as a mandate

<sup>12</sup> Cincinnati Gazette, Apr. 13, 20, May 4, 1850; Belmont Chronicle (St. Clairsville), July 5; Ohio State Journal, June 29.

<sup>13</sup> Ohio Statesman, Apr. 17, 18, May 6, June 11, July 6, 9, 1850.

<sup>14</sup> Debates and Proceedings, I, 707-8.

<sup>15</sup> Sept. 3, 4, 5, 1850.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter IX.

for hard money. After much discussion, the radicals were forced to give ground and a provision was placed in the completed draft that banking laws should be submitted to a vote of the people before going into effect.<sup>17</sup> This was far from a hard money position but it insured popular control of the creation of banks.

With respect to the mooted question of the right of the assembly to repeal charters of incorporation, the convention indulged in more prolonged discussions and showed even greater bitterness than it had over the hard money issue.<sup>18</sup> The heart of Locofoco radicalism lay in the claim that one assembly could not grant any concession that a later assembly might not revoke. To the conservatives such a doctrine meant the repudiation of contracts and the confiscation of property, thus violating the United States Constitution. Despite the efforts of Reemelin and other radical Democrats to hold the majority as a unit for the right of legislative repeal of all charters already in existence or to be granted, eleven conservatives, nearly all from the southern half of the State, deserted their party to vote with the Whigs and Free Soilers in defeating the proposal, 44 to 42.<sup>19</sup> Some five or six times the issue came up with the same result. In the end it was agreed that general laws creating corporations should be subject to repeal but nothing was said about existing charters. They were apparently protected by a general provision against retroactive laws or laws impairing the obligation of contracts.

In some other respects the radicals had their way. No special laws creating charters of incorporation were to be passed; the legislature was authorized to prescribe unlimited individual liability of stockholders in corporations, if it saw fit, and in any case at least double liability; corporations were to be taxed equally with individuals, while a special clause required the taxation of banks on all their property of every description without deduction, including moneys loaned and notes and bills discounted or purchased; both the State

<sup>17</sup> Article XIII, Section 7, Constitution of 1851.

<sup>18</sup> *Debates and Proceedings*, II, 196-209.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 210.

and its local subdivisions were forbidden to buy stock in or lend their credit to any corporation or association for any purpose; and finally, the State debt, except for suppressing insurrection or repelling invasion, was limited to \$750,000. All of these were cardinal features of the Locofoco program, though not all were opposed by the conservatives.

The legislature's powers, almost unlimited in the old constitution, were restricted not only by the corporation and debt clauses but also by provisions for the popular election of executive and judicial officers, the source of so much log-rolling in the past. The convention erred badly, however, in not conferring upon the governor a veto power over legislation. After long discussions such a proposal was voted down, 46 to 31.<sup>20</sup> The governor was thus left in much the same position as before. A whole new system of courts was created with a supreme court, district courts served by supreme and common pleas judges, and common pleas courts. The State was to be divided into nine common pleas districts, each with three subdivisions, but subject to alteration by the legislature. The supreme court was to consist of five judges elected for five-year terms. The old requirement for holding court in each county once a year was dropped. A probate court to deal with probate and testamentary matters was created for each county.

In addition to the governor the executive department was to include a lieutenant-governor, a secretary of state, an auditor of state, a treasurer of state and an attorney-general, each elected for a two-year term except the auditor, who was to serve four years. A Board of Public Works consisting of three members, elected in rotation for three-year terms, was also created to supervise the State system of public works. Both houses of the General Assembly were now to be elected biennially. The annoying apportionment problem was solved by provisions defining the senatorial districts and fixing representation in the lower house according to a ratio determined by dividing the total population every ten years by the number one hundred. Half of a ratio was necessary to entitle a

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 313.

county to one representative; otherwise it was to be attached to an adjoining county. Additional members were allotted according to the number of ratios and a county might receive another representative for part of a decennial period in case of a large fractional ratio. By a similar system senatorial districts could be divided or annexed to neighboring districts, according to a senatorial ratio determined by dividing the population by the number thirty-five. The governor, auditor and secretary of state were to apportion senators and representatives according to these rules every ten years, after each federal census. This system removed the apportionment problem from politics and provided a reasonably fair system of representation according to population.

The elective franchise was given to all white male citizens, residents of the State one year. An attempt to include Negroes was voted down 66 to 12,<sup>21</sup> the minority coming from the Western Reserve. A proposal to admit women to the suffrage failed by a margin of 72 to 7, after Dr. Townshend had made the solitary speech in favor of the proposal.<sup>22</sup>

The liquor question was beginning to disturb politics,<sup>23</sup> the temperance advocates being opposed to a license system. The convention wisely solved the problem by a provision for a separate vote on the license issue at the time the constitution was submitted.

Unlike the old constitution the new instrument permitted amendments by popular vote after approval by three-fifths of the members of each house of the assembly. A constitutional convention might be called if two-thirds of each house so voted and the electors approved by a majority of those voting at an election for members of the assembly. Every twenty years, beginning in 1871, the question of holding a constitutional convention was to be submitted to a popular vote. The convention adjourned on March 10, 1851, after adopting the Constitution by a vote of 79 to 14.<sup>24</sup>

The new Constitution was a great improvement over the old Jef-

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 554.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 555.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter VIII.

<sup>24</sup> *Debates and Proceedings*, II, 870.



fersonian document of 1802, but it still reflected the essentially agrarian character of the State. Anti-bank, anti-corporation, taxation and other provisions revealed the hostility of the Locofocos to corporate capitalism and all forms of special privilege, while the restrictions on the legislature and the popular election of judges and State executive officers were in line with the democratic character of the movement. But the Constitution looked backward at the *laissez-faire* past; it took no account of the changing economic life of the State, and made no provision for the transformations that railroads, factories and financial institutions were to make in the generation to come. In a sense, it was the last effort of the Jacksonians to strengthen the bulwarks of agrarianism against the onset of the new economic order.

Democrats of all shades of opinion supported the proposed constitution. The radicals were not satisfied with the currency and corporation clauses but believed it far superior to the old instrument and at least easy to amend. The Free Soilers, though disappointed by the failure of the Negro suffrage proposal, regarded it as a liberal document worthy of the support of all progressives. The Whigs, however, were divided. In the convention thirteen of them, with one Free Soiler, had refused to sign the constitution. The Whig State central committee issued a statement criticising some features of it but did not definitely recommend its rejection. The *Ohio State Journal* tried to remain neutral, opening its columns to both sides. The Constitution of 1802 was out-of-date in so many respects that liberal Whigs were inclined to look upon any change as for the better. The curbing of the radicals on the banking and currency question had improved the chances of conservative support. Nevertheless, the vote was close, ratification succeeding by 16,288 in a total vote of 234,840.<sup>25</sup> The conservatism of the south and southeast almost defeated the Constitution.

The radical Democrats now turned their attention to the capture of the State government. The next assembly would have much work to do in carrying out the provisions of the new Constitution and it

<sup>25</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, July 7, 1851.

was important that the party complete what it had begun. The radicals controlled the State convention and all the candidates, except possibly Allen G. Thurman, one of the nominees for supreme judge, were of their belief.<sup>26</sup> The Whigs, charged with opposing the new Constitution and led by a gubernatorial candidate, Samuel F. Vinton, who admittedly had voted against it, were in no position to offer an effective opposition. Furthermore, the slavery question still divided them, and the Free Soilers, or Free Democrats, as they were calling themselves, were more aggressive than ever. With the cry that the new Constitution should be put in the hands of its friends, the Democrats won a decisive victory, carrying their entire State ticket by large majorities and the assembly as well. All that the Whigs could do was to let radicalism run its course and hope that its excesses would produce the inevitable reaction.

The banking interests were in a strong position, nevertheless, despite the passage of the new Constitution. While the Constitutional Convention was completing its work, the last General Assembly under the old order was enacting a free banking law.<sup>27</sup> This law permitted any group of persons to organize a bank if they conformed to certain regulations in the act. Bank notes were secured by Ohio or United States stock equal in amount to the notes issued with the total not to exceed three times the bank's actual capital. Liability of stockholders for bank debts was limited except where the bank was owned by fewer than six stockholders, in which case individual liability was required. In general, the act provided for a safe and well-regulated system which might have allowed for future expansion had not the new constitution come into effect, thus raising a question as to the legality of further incorporations. Even so, thirteen banks were organized under the act in 1851-1852.

The new assembly of 1852-1853, thoroughly under radical control, proceeded to overhaul the taxation system to conform to the constitutional requirement that all property should be taxed uniformly according to its true value in money. Prior to 1850 banks

<sup>26</sup> See Chapter IX.

<sup>27</sup> Huntington, "Banking and Currency," 437, 499.

were taxed on their dividends or profits, in accordance with the terms of their charters or according to the general law under which they were incorporated.<sup>28</sup> The assemblies of 1850 and 1851 had attempted to make this more uniform by enacting laws taxing banks on capital stock and surplus, the Whigs being embarrassed by charges that banks escaped the burden of taxation levied upon other forms of property. Neither law was a success as most banks demurred at any change which might affect their charter rights and increase their taxes. Court litigation resulted in a decision of the United States Supreme Court in 1853 that voided the Act of 1851 as impairing the obligation of a contract. Meanwhile the legislature of 1852-1853 had passed a far more onerous law. This measure attempted to tax all property by a uniform rule, thus assessing banking property of every description, including notes and bills discounted or purchased and all moneys or effects loaned or used for a profit.<sup>29</sup> Not only Whigs but Free Soilers and even some Democrats protested at these drastic provisions, while the branches of the State bank prepared to take the matter to the courts. The general opposition to the law by the banks led to the passage of a "crow-bar law" at the second session of the assembly in 1853 authorizing the county treasurers to break open the vaults of the resisting banks and to seize the amount of the tax plus penalties and costs of collection.<sup>30</sup>

The measure proved to be as futile as its predecessors, for the banks appealed to the United States courts for protection in the cases where enforcement was attempted. A case was already before the Supreme Court involving the tax law itself and in May, 1854, a decision was handed down declaring unconstitutional the provisions taxing banks chartered by the Act of 1845.<sup>31</sup> Such charters were held to be in the nature of contracts not to be altered by the assembly. The *Ohio Statesman*, on behalf of the radical Democracy, savagely attacked the Supreme Court and demanded the reorganiza-

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 456-63.

<sup>29</sup> E. L. Bogart, "Financial History of Ohio," *University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences* (Urbana), I (1912), 223-9; *Ohio Laws, Acts*, 50 Assemb., 1852, L, 135-67.

<sup>30</sup> *Ohio Laws, Acts*, LI (1853), 476-83.

<sup>31</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, May 30, 1854.

tion and democratization of the federal judiciary,<sup>32</sup> but these were mere gestures of defiance.

Ohio's own supreme court, at the same time, gave a most unexpected interpretation of this same tax law. It upheld the validity of the bank taxation section as in conformity with the State Constitution but incidentally expressed an opinion that a provision permitting individuals to deduct their debts from their assets for purposes of taxation was invalid.<sup>33</sup> When the State auditor attempted to act in accordance with this interpretation he encountered the solid opposition of the business classes who now found themselves being taxed by the same rule of no deductions for debts that had been applied to the banks but without the latter's recourse to the federal courts, as no charter rights were involved. The uniform rule of taxation was a two-edged sword. Public meetings of outraged business men at Cincinnati demanded a constitutional amendment while the Democratic Cincinnati *Enquirer*, suddenly losing its radicalism under this kind of pressure, echoed their views.<sup>34</sup> The assembly took no action, whereupon some 1,200 Cincinnati taxpayers signed an agreement to resist the auditor's dictum. Dissatisfaction also appeared at Dayton, Cleveland and other places.<sup>35</sup>

The political consequences were disastrous for the Democrats. Just when the Nebraska bill, pending in Congress, was arousing such intense indignation against the party, a conservative reaction set in against Locofocoism. At Cincinnati, the *Gazette*, organ of the Anti-Nebraska fusionists, made a special appeal to the business classes to punish the Democratic party for its radicalism. A "small note" law eliminating out-of-state bank notes smaller than ten dollars from circulation, also a product of the Democratic assembly, came in for vigorous criticism along with the tax law, while the inadequacy of the circulating medium under the existing banking

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1, 3, 5, 27, 1854.

<sup>33</sup> Exchange Bank of Columbus vs. O. P. Hines, Treasurer of Franklin County, *Ohio State Reports, Warden and Smith*, New Series, III, 1-66.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 4, and May 23, 1854.

<sup>35</sup> Cincinnati *Gazette*, May 8, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 27, 1854; Columbus *Ohio Columbian*, May 24, 1854.



system was attributed to the radical policy of the Democrats.<sup>36</sup> The Anti-Nebraska movement alone would undoubtedly have defeated the party of Pierce and Douglas but the votes of the disgruntled conservatives made the defeat almost a debacle.<sup>37</sup> A supreme judge, a member of the Board of Public Works and all the Congressmen were fusionists by large majorities.

The banking and currency question was thrust into the background and played slight part in the State election of 1855 when a governor and other State officials and a new assembly were to be chosen. The Kansas struggle and Know-Nothingism filled the political stage. But the platform of the new Republican party contained a vague pledge for "a just and equal basis of taxation," and the legislature of 1856-1857 showed itself to be of conservative character on economic questions, if not on slavery. The presence in the Republican Senate of Alfred Kelley, veteran Whig legislator and author of the State Banking Act of 1845, seemed to guarantee that the Whig tradition would be preserved in the new party. A tax law was accordingly passed to permit individuals to deduct debts from credits for the assessment of taxes, while banks, though nominally taxed on all their property, were saved by a vague clause exempting those institutions which, by the United States Constitution, could only be taxed according to the terms of their charters.<sup>38</sup> A rather inconsistent sister act taxed the State banks chartered by the Act of 1845 on their capital stock, surplus, contingent fund and undivided profits.<sup>39</sup> The Small Note Law of 1854 was repealed and, most important of all, a new general banking law, subject to popular referendum, was enacted in response to the cry of the business classes for more banking capital.<sup>40</sup> The latter measure, however, was defeated at the fall election by its failure to secure a majority of the total vote cast.<sup>41</sup> A similar bill was passed

<sup>36</sup> *Cincinnati Gazette*, Aug.-Oct., 1854.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter X.

<sup>38</sup> *Ohio Laws, Acts*, 52 Assemb., 1 Sess., LIII (1856), 51-5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 216-7.

<sup>40</sup> Huntington, "Banking and Currency," 464-5.

<sup>41</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Nov. 8, 1856.

at the session of 1857 in the hope that this verdict might be reversed. It also failed at the polls.<sup>42</sup>

A solution for the problem of creating more banks was at hand in the form of a new interpretation of the free banking law of 1851. The State supreme court held that this law was not impaired by the adoption of the Constitution of 1851 but remained in effect as before.<sup>43</sup> Thereupon Governor Chase suggested that its workings be observed and that it be amended whenever it seemed necessary. This hint meant that future banking laws, if disguised as amendments to the Act of 1851, would escape the referendum provision of the State Constitution. The election of a Democratic assembly in 1857 stopped any attempts in this direction but this subterfuge proved useful long afterward.

The banking question drops into the background in the later years of the decade with the ever mounting bitterness of the slavery problem. Even the Democratic party was losing interest in the matter, for much of the radicalism of 1850 had evaporated. A Democratic assembly did repeat in 1858-1859 the attempts of 1852-1853 to tax banks without regard to their charters and even enacted another crow-bar law, but the federal courts prevented its enforcement.<sup>44</sup> The *Ohio Statesman* explained, however, that the party was not trying to resist the United States Supreme Court but merely to bring about another test case in the hope of securing a reversal of the earlier decisions.<sup>45</sup> The Democrats were embarrassed by their conservative stand on the slavery issue. Defenders of the Supreme Court after the Dred Scott case and upholders of federal authority against Republican radicalism in the fugitive slave cases,<sup>46</sup> they could not well attack the federal judiciary's stand on the banking question. Former conservative Whigs, now in the Democratic party or veering toward it, might be driven off by outbursts of anti-bank radicalism.

<sup>42</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Oct. 24, 1857.

<sup>43</sup> Huntington, "Banking and Currency," 465.

<sup>44</sup> Bogart, "Financial History," 291-4.

<sup>45</sup> Feb. 11, 14, 1859.

<sup>46</sup> See Chapters XI and XII.

On the other hand, the Republicans were turning toward a state's rights position and were showing marked hostility toward the United States Supreme Court. Radicals in the party, mostly former Free Soilers and Democrats, were openly advocating nullification of the fugitive slave law. Dislike of the federal judiciary in this matter made them indifferent or hostile to its position as the protector of banks. When the Ohio Supreme Court, now a Republican body, reiterated that banks could be taxed despite their charters, the *Ohio State Journal*, once a conservative Whig organ, expressed its approval, terming the contractual character of a bank charter a "metaphysical abstraction," "utterly incomprehensible."<sup>47</sup> However, when the Republicans returned to power, they reverted to their position of 1856-1857, and by the act of April 4, 1861, taxed banks on their capital stock, undivided profits and term deposits.<sup>48</sup> This was generally accepted by the banks and the tax question ceased to be a matter of controversy. In 1867 this was changed to provide that the real estate of a bank should be taxed where located, according to the uniform rule, and that its shares of stock should be taxed where the bank was located.<sup>49</sup>

The Democrats made one change in the currency system while in control of the assembly in 1858-1859. The Breslin-Gibson treasury frauds of 1857 had aroused bitter criticisms of the existing State financial system,<sup>50</sup> which permitted the State treasurer to control the public money almost at his own discretion. Both Gibson and Breslin had had close relations with certain banks and misuse of State funds had been a consequence. Furthermore, the Panic of 1857 conveyed a warning against the use of banks as public depositories. The assembly, influenced by these experiences, passed a sub-treasury law in 1858 to divorce the treasury from the banks.<sup>51</sup> The State and county treasurers were made custodians of public funds, and a step in the direction of hard money was taken in a pro-

<sup>47</sup> Feb. 10, 1859.

<sup>48</sup> Huntington, "Banking and Currency," 463.

<sup>49</sup> Bogart, "Financial History," 298.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter XI.

<sup>51</sup> Ohio Laws, *Acts*, 53 Assemb., 1 Sess., LV (1858), 44-51.

vision requiring them to pay out specie for small bills owed by State or county on a sliding scale, increasing over a period of years until finally all disbursements were to be in coin. But no provision was made for the payment of taxes in specie, the matter of securing the gold and silver being left to the treasurers to solve. Such an omission caused criticism by Republicans, but the *Ohio Statesman* admitted with regret that the majority of Democrats preferred to approach hard money by degrees.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the days of Locofoco radicalism were past. No longer was there interest in the old issues.

From an economic standpoint the banks of Ohio rendered a useful service in the decade of the fifties. They weathered two crises, in 1854 and in 1857, with surprisingly few fatalities.<sup>53</sup> The great Panic of 1857 was precipitated in New York by the failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, the last of the old banks chartered by special acts. Only three of Ohio's authorized banks suspended during the panic, though a number of private banks collapsed. However, local mobs sometimes assisted the hard-pressed institutions by threatening or driving away brokers from the large cities who appeared with quantities of notes to be redeemed in gold or silver. At Athens a broker was forced to leave town, though the bank later paid \$1,400 in gold for the notes he held.<sup>54</sup> Similar occurrences were reported at Mansfield, Springfield, Marietta, Xenia and Piqua.

The activities of brokers and private bankers, who could charge a higher legal rate of interest than the chartered institutions, and the widespread circulation of out-of-state bank notes of varying soundness made Ohio's currency and credit facilities at times far from satisfactory,<sup>55</sup> but the banks, though sometimes conniving with brokers to secure larger interest rates and often avoiding redemption of their own notes by various expedients, did not create these circumstances. In the main they contributed much to the economic

<sup>52</sup> Apr. 24, 1858.

<sup>53</sup> Huntington, "Banking and Currency," 454-5, 470-2; Toledo *Blade*, Oct. 6, 1857.

<sup>54</sup> Athens *Messenger*, Nov. 6, 1857; Huntington, "Banking and Currency," 472, footnote.

<sup>55</sup> Huntington, "Banking and Currency," 439-55, 479-84.



progress of the State. But it must not be forgotten that Ohio in the 1850's was a far wealthier State than in the 1820's and 1830's, and that its accumulated capital and expanding business developed a type of banking hardly possible in the earlier days. The steady increase of bank deposits is proof that Ohio was approaching financial maturity.

Locofoco distrust of corporations other than banks showed itself in the first assembly under the new Constitution when a new corporation code was enacted with a provision for the individual liability of stockholders for the debts of a corporation.<sup>56</sup> But the impracticability of this requirement was soon realized, and at the urging of a conservative Democratic legislator, the next Democratic assembly replaced it with a double liability clause.<sup>57</sup> There was also a flurry of ill feeling toward the railroads in 1852, largely because of their competition with the canals, but a regulatory law, passed as a consequence, had slight effect.<sup>58</sup> In later years the symptoms of public antipathy toward the railways were due to actual experiences with evils in the transportation system and hardly to a resurgence of Locofoco zeal. Nor was there any party question involved. In divorcing the State and its local subdivisions from further participation in private schemes for internal improvements, as provided in the Constitution of 1851, the radicals had affected the early development of rail transportation, but beyond that their influence was slight.

Locofocoism had lost its potency as a political movement in the later fifties largely because it had accomplished its work. It had given to the State a new constitution of an agrarian reform character and had contributed to its political life a vigorous and wholesome democracy that spoke the political philosophy of the common man. Its radicalism, dangerous or foolish though it seemed to the upholders of the status quo, nevertheless injected into the political system a much needed stimulant to counteract the forces of inertia

<sup>56</sup> Ohio Laws, *Acts*, 50 Assemb., 1 Sess., I. (1852), 274-97; *ibid.*, 50 Assemb., 2 Sess., LI (1853), 386.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 51 Assemb., LII (1854), 44-5.

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter XI.

and tradition that tend all too rapidly to devitalize American political life.

The Civil War closed the period when currency and banking problems were local in character. These were now shifted to the national scene, and for many years after the war were among the most troublesome questions confronting the political leader, the business man, the farmer and the laborer. Ohio, like its sister states, was affected, but the solution lay outside the field of State action. The political aspects of greenbacks and national banks are discussed elsewhere, but the end of the story of the old State banks may be given here.

The Civil War emergency created the United States notes, or greenbacks, issued by the Federal Government as legal tender without a gold or silver redemption privilege. This placed the country on a paper currency basis, though State banks had already suspended specie payment as a result of the financial crisis of December, 1861.<sup>59</sup> Ohio banks were among the last to abandon a metallic standard. An act of January 16, 1862, authorized such action and the board of control of the State bank, after a struggle, decided to permit it.<sup>60</sup>

The passage of the National Banking Act of February 25, 1863, offered an opportunity for state banks to become members of a new national system. The most significant requirement was the deposit of United States government bonds with the treasurer of the United States in order to receive in return circulating notes to the amount of ninety per cent of the market value of the bonds deposited. Ohio banks were quick to take advantage of the privilege and 38 of the first 134 national banks were organized in this State, the largest total in the Nation.<sup>61</sup> The expiration of the charter of the State bank in 1866 and the prohibitive federal tax on note issues of state banks accelerated the process and in 1867 Ohio had 137 national banks, 7 State banks, and 100 private banks.<sup>62</sup> In 1861

<sup>59</sup> Davis R. Dewey, *Financial History of the United States* (New York, 1918), 281-3.

<sup>60</sup> Bogart, "Financial History," 296.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>62</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report, 1867* (Columbus, 1868), 30.

there had been 7 independent banks (law of 1845), 12 free banks (law of 1851), and 36 branches of the State bank.<sup>63</sup>

In 1873 the State's operating financial institutions consisted of 168 national banks, 15 State banks, 21 savings banks (under an act of February 26, 1873), and 175 private banks. Their total capital was \$36,767,622, of which the national banks had \$28,883,000.<sup>64</sup> Ottawa, Paulding and Putnam counties in the northwest and Pike County in the south either had no banks or made no reports. Modern finance capitalism had become solidly established in Ohio and the old battles of "locos" and conservatives over the State's currency and banking seemed as remote as the days of the stage coach.

The State treasury, heavily burdened from the internal improvements craze of the 1830's and 1840's, seemed to take a turn for the better when the new Constitution went into effect. By that document the State was forbidden to incur further indebtedness and was required to establish a sinking fund to pay off the existing debt. This was to consist of \$100,000 annually, to be increased by compounding at the rate of six per cent. The income from the public works and from stocks held by the State plus taxation was to provide the necessary amount. The auditor, secretary of state and attorney-general were to constitute the "Commissioners of the Sinking Fund." Thus the debt of approximately \$15,000,000 should have been paid off in forty years.

The legislature, however, found the sinking fund a tempting source of revenue, particularly in the lean years. Instead of increasing taxes, always a distasteful task, it dipped into the debt redemption fund for current needs and refunded bonds becoming due, thus prolonging the life of the State debt.<sup>65</sup> Legislative irresponsibility was never better illustrated than in the measures dealing with the debt. Governors and sinking fund commissioners urged that taxes be levied to comply with the Constitution but the legislature, unhampered by an executive veto, followed the line of

<sup>63</sup> Huntington, "Banking and Currency," 478.

<sup>64</sup> Secretary of State, *Annual Report, 1873* (Columbus, 1874), 329-30.

<sup>65</sup> Ernest L. Bogart, *Internal Improvements and State Debt in Ohio* (New York, 1924), 186-203.

least resistance. As a consequence, by refunding the old bonds instead of paying them off, the legislature put off the day of reckoning. The treasury defalcation of 1857 was a heavy blow and the State had to borrow to meet interest payments. The panic was a further complication, the canals were now a burden on the treasury, and a new loan was impending when the Civil War broke out.

The immediate effect of the firing on Fort Sumter was the passage of an appropriation of \$1,000,000 by an almost unanimous vote for defense purposes and for the aid of the government in suppressing rebellion. The Constitution permitted the incurring of debt to repel invasion, suppress insurrection and defend the State. By the end of the war Ohio had spent for military purposes \$10,410,240. Despite this the public debt was actually reduced by \$1,985,259 between November 15, 1861, and November 15, 1865. The average increase of State levies for the war years was only seven-tenths of one mill on the dollar, but an increased valuation of the property returned for taxation and a patriotic willingness to pay taxes promptly seem to account for this phenomenon. Local taxes increased sharply in the last two years of the war due to an inflated currency, bounties to soldiers and local needs. Five "Union loans" supplemented the revenues from taxation, four at six per cent interest, and one at five.<sup>66</sup> The aggregate debt in 1867 was \$11,056,817, of which nearly nine-tenths was held by eastern and European investors.

Debt reduction continued at a fairly rapid rate for several years after the war, but a deficiency in the general revenue fund in 1868 caused another raid on the sinking fund, while a reduction in the levy for sinking fund purposes the next year caused further complications. Bonds due in 1870 were paid off but the sinking fund was soon an embarrassment. Bonds could not be purchased on the open market before they were due without the State's paying an exorbitant premium, and so the annual additions to the sinking fund had to lie idle in the treasury. The legislature transferred part of this temporarily to other funds in 1872 and 1873, and then lowered the

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 209-14; Bogart, "Financial History," 232-5.



tax rate. The net effect was to postpone the payment of that part of the debt that became due in 1876. The principal of the debt on November 15, 1872, was \$8,583,547.<sup>67</sup> The same hit-and-miss financial policy continued for three more decades before the last of the debt was finally paid off on July 1, 1903.

The new greenback currency that came into existence during the war raised a problem for both federal and state governments. Bonds were payable in "coin," but did this prevent their payment in the new legal tender currency? As the premium on gold increased, the temptation to use the cheaper medium proved too great. In 1863 the State solved the problem by paying the interest on its bonds in the new United States paper currency. The gold and silver in the treasury were sold at a nice profit in 1866. Despite protests from some of the creditors, the principal of the State bonds was also paid off in currency, a policy followed by most of the other states.<sup>68</sup> The policy of the Federal Government toward its bondholders, which became a major political issue by 1868, is discussed elsewhere.

<sup>67</sup> Bogart, *Internal Improvements*, 214-9.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 205-9.

## CHAPTER VI

# Cultural Strivings

INTELLECTUAL growth in Ohio in the third quarter of the nineteenth century may be exemplified by a widening interest in literature, art and science, progress in journalism, and a great advance in public education. Yet in literature and the fine arts it was a period of promise, rather than achievement; few Ohioans could be termed scientists; higher education, still in denominational shackles, was retarded by the shock of war; the learned professions hardly kept step with the material progress of the State.

In the pre-war decade there were suggestions of a budding native culture. A generation, born in Ohio, was reaching maturity. According to William Dean Howells, writing a good many years later, "We had already begun to be Ohioans, with an accent of our own, and I suppose our manners were simpler and freer than those of the East."<sup>1</sup> New Englanders, Pennsylvanians, Southerners and others were losing their distinctive traits in the Ohio melting pot. As the frontier passed and an urban life appeared, the new society became articulate and a literary movement began. This was marked especially by attempts to establish literary periodicals, by a widespread interest in literary societies and lyceums and by an increased output on the part of local writers with poetry as the preferred medium of expression.

The clearest evidence of Ohio's intellectual growing pains is found in the appearance of so many periodicals more or less literary in their appeal. Venable, in his *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley*, lists some 46 publications of this character, projected in Ohio between 1840 and 1860, the great majority at Cincinnati.<sup>2</sup> This total, surprising as it is, is probably too small as it is made

<sup>1</sup> William D. Howells, *Years of My Youth* (New York, 1916), 173.

<sup>2</sup> William H. Venable, *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley* (Cincinnati, 1891), 124-8.

up primarily of Ohio Valley publications. Most of these were the products of youthful enthusiasm, and too often very little else, for their histories are all too brief. A few periodicals that were not primarily literary but of a religious, professional or miscellaneous character prospered for a longer period. In this category may be cited the *American Israelite* (1854-), the *Railroad Record* (1853-1873), and the *Ladies' Repository* (1841-1876). The literary ones were, without exception, short-lived. Yet they are proof of a creative impulse which deserved better of its generation than it received. The efforts of such men as William D. Gallagher, Coates Kinney, William T. Coggeshall, Moncure D. Conway and others to develop a genuine western literature failed through no fault of their own.<sup>3</sup> Western readers wanted eastern books and magazines, written by men of established reputations. Obscure western authors, however deserving, were overshadowed by the prestige and popularity of Dickens, Thackeray, Hawthorne, Emerson, Longfellow and the other vaunted names of New and old England.

*The Genius of the West*, in which W. T. Coggeshall was the guiding spirit, and *The Dial*, edited by Rev. Moncure D. Conway, are the best examples of literary periodicals in these years. Nearly all the western writers of any note were contributors to the *Genius*, but despite the popular character of its articles it failed to win sufficient support and suspended in its fifth volume (1856). *The Dial* was an even more notable achievement, perhaps the most remarkable literary periodical in the West prior to the Civil War. As the editor proclaimed it, "The Dial stands before you, reader, a legitimation of the Spirit of the Age, which *aspires to be free*: free in thought, doubt, utterance, love and knowledge."<sup>4</sup> In his efforts in these directions, Conway admitted articles ranging from a violent attack on the use of prayer and a plea for a more sympathetic treatment of prostitutes to a study of Christ as a moral and spiritual

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter III.

<sup>4</sup> *The Dial: A Monthly Magazine for Literature, Philosophy and Religion* (Cincinnati), I (1860). 11.

leader.<sup>5</sup> Darwin's *Origin of Species* was favorably reviewed as a work of great significance while Whitman was praised as having "set the pulses of America to music."<sup>6</sup> The editor was a disciple of Emerson, who incidentally contributed articles to three numbers, and a friend and admirer of Theodore Parker. The mission of *The Dial* was to carry New England liberal Unitarianism and Transcendentalism to the less cultured West. But the West was infertile soil for such transplantation and was offended at having its moral and religious conventions subjected to criticism. And so *The Dial* expired with its twelfth number, with its editor in his valedictory pleading for "Rationalism" as the only principle worth striving for.<sup>7</sup>

Far more in tune with the prevailing taste in literature was the *Ladies' Repository*, a religious and literary periodical published in Cincinnati under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>8</sup> Edited by ministers and at first narrow and intolerant in its editorial viewpoint, it did offer to aspiring writers a steady outlet for their products throughout the period. Under Rev. Davis W. Clark's editorship (1853-1863) fiction was admitted, steel engravings became a regular feature and circulation reached forty thousand. The more intellectual publications, lacking a religious appeal and support, fell by the wayside while the *Repository* continued its prosperous career. Not until 1876 did it finally expire. Almost every western writer of any repute found recognition in its pages. Yet it is rather a sorry commentary on the state of periodical literature in the West that it had to subserve the interests of morals and religion, that it could not stand alone.

For a time a secular rival also flourished at Cincinnati, *Moore's Western Ladies' Book*, originally named the *Western Magazine*.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "On Prayer," *ibid.*, 118-30, "Prostitution," 669-76. A series, "The Christianity of Christ," began in the January issue and was concluded in December. Contributions were unsigned.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 196-7, 517.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 713-5.

<sup>8</sup> Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850*, Carl Wittke, ed., *The History of the State of Ohio* (Columbus), III (1941), 190.

<sup>9</sup> Venable, *Literary Culture*, 82-6.



Fashion plates and music were added to the customary literary contents, and a special department, "The Genius of Liberty," supplied material on woman's rights. This section was edited by Miss Elizabeth Aldrich, who had attempted unsuccessfully to operate a reform magazine under that name in 1851 devoted to the uplift of her sex. *Moore's Western Ladies' Book* was in existence about eight years.

The *Parlor Magazine* appeared at Cincinnati in July, 1853, to last through two volumes.<sup>10</sup> Jethro Jackson began it but brought in Alice Cary as editor after six months. It was not a financial success and was combined with the *West American Review* in 1855, but the merger failed to preserve its life.

That staunch advocate of dress reform and woman's rights, Mrs. Amelia Bloomer, brought her organ, *The Lily*, from New York to Ohio in 1854, publishing it at Mt. Vernon for two years.<sup>11</sup> It was then removed to Richmond, Indiana.

At Cleveland the *Family Visitor* was launched in 1850 but was soon being printed at Hudson.<sup>12</sup> Among the editors was Dr. Jared P. Kirtland, the naturalist. Its emphasis was upon scientific, educational and economic topics, since its editors were members of the faculty of Western Reserve. Its life-span ended in 1853.

The golden years of Cincinnati as a publishing center faded with the Civil War. It continued to print some denominational, fraternal and trade journals,<sup>13</sup> but efforts to produce regional literary magazines almost ceased. The wide circulation of eastern periodicals and the growth of other western centers, notably Chicago and St. Louis, lessened the cultural output of the Queen City. *Golden Hours* (1869-1881) and *Saturday Night* (1872-1885) are examples of post-war story magazines of popular appeal, but the flood of literary publications had subsided.

Newspapers supplied another outlet for aspiring authors. These

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-7.

<sup>11</sup> Frank L. Mott, *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge, 1938), II, 1850-1865, 51.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Cist, *Cincinnati in 1859* (Cincinnati, 1859), 212-5; D. J. Kenny, *Illustrated Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, 1875), 69-70.

organs could usually find room for poems, essays and short stories, as their columns were not crowded with the syndicated matter, special features, advertisements and comic strips of the present. Even such agricultural journals as the *Ohio Farmer* and the *Ohio Cultivator* made use of original poems, essays and short stories. In the columns of the former, William Dean Howells early made his appearance in print.<sup>14</sup>

Of the various forms of literary expression, poetry was easily the most popular. Everyone who could write verses that rhymed regarded himself as a poet. William T. Coggeshall, who edited in 1860 a large volume entitled *The Poets and Poetry of the West*, included ninety-seven men and fifty-five women as worthy of representation in his collection.<sup>15</sup> Sixty of the group were residents of Ohio, while thirty-nine were born in the State. No other western state could boast of so many, Kentucky and Indiana together falling far below these totals. Such well known public personages as Governor Salmon P. Chase, Harvey Rice, State senator and educator, and Colonel Sullivan D. Harris, editor of the State's oldest farm journal, found place in Coggeshall's collection along with Alice and Phoebe Cary, William Dean Howells, John J. Piatt, William D. Gallagher and other literary figures.

Few of them pursued literature as a profession. Coggeshall estimated that not over ten of the 152 writers in his collection could be so classified.<sup>16</sup> The others found composition a pleasant diversion for leisure moments. Their poetry as a consequence lacked originality and emotional depth. It was sentimental, romantic, humorless; it often pointed a moral lesson or sorrowed over thwarted love and pined for the solace of death. This "mortuary school," as it has been called, took its poetry so seriously that it ruled out all crude wit, vigor of expression and satire as inelegant. Coggeshall, in including in his volume some rather clever parodies by Phoebe Cary, questioned "the taste and propriety of these travesties of the

<sup>14</sup> Howells, *Years of My Youth*, 96; *Ohio Farmer*, IX (Feb. 25, 1860), 60.

<sup>15</sup> William T. Coggeshall, *The Poets and Poetry of the West* (Columbus, 1860), p. v.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

beautiful.”<sup>17</sup> Western poets patterned after Longfellow. Suffering from a literary inferiority complex, they sought to prove that the western world was as cultured, decorous and elegant in its literature as New England. Divorced from its own vigorous soil, western poetry tended to be artificial, hackneyed and commonplace.

Yet it would be unfair to characterize this poetry as altogether bad or worthless. One is surprised that, considering their cultural background, the majority of these poets wrote so well. If their productions lacked vigor and originality, the fault no doubt lay in the standards of taste of their generation. If Longfellow was generally regarded as the greatest American poet and Whitman, in the popular mind, as the apostle of coarseness in literature,<sup>18</sup> while Poe was termed even by Emerson as “the jingle man,”<sup>19</sup> what could be expected of the western neophytes who sought only to walk in the footsteps of the New England masters? Emerson might chide the West for its failure to develop a native literature,<sup>20</sup> but he failed to recognize the fact that in Ohio and other western states a new society was in process of formation from many composite elements and that a native culture could not spring into being full grown. Literature was imported and imitative. The best energies were still devoted to conquering the new environment and to the quest for material gain. Cultural progress must await material progress. A society prepared to appreciate and sustain its own writers was slow in evolving.

Ohio's poets, everything considered, did not compare unfavorably with the average of the older states. Alice and Phoebe Cary had gone to New York in 1850, but most of their later work reflected their Buckeye up-bringing. Otway Curry died in 1855 and William D. Gallagher removed to Kentucky in 1852, with the best of his work already done. But Coates Kinney (1826-1904), John J. Piatt (1835-1917), and William Dean Howells (1837-1920) won

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 359.

<sup>18</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Jan. 20, 25, 1860

<sup>19</sup> William D. Howells, *Literary Friends and Acquaintances* (New York, 1901), 63.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-3.

their laurels in these years.<sup>21</sup> The first two were not Ohio-born but came to the State quite young, Kinney from New York and Piatt from Indiana. Kinney's first book, *Keeuka and Other Poems*, appeared in 1855 but much of his work consisted of contributions to newspapers and periodicals. An active newspaper man at Xenia, Cincinnati and other cities, he served literature in his leisure hours. Though he rose above the soft sentimentality of his day, it was his fate to be esteemed by his generation not for his more serious efforts but for a simple lyric, "Rain on the Roof," written at Bellefontaine in the summer of 1849. One stanza follows:

"When the hovering humid darkness  
Over all the starry spheres  
Flows and falls like sorrow softly  
Breaking into blessed tears,  
Then how sweet to press the pillow  
Of a cottage-chamber bed  
And lie listening to the rain-drops  
On the low roof overhead."

Piatt, a resident of Columbus for a time before the war, won an accolade seldom achieved west of the Alleghenies—the *Atlantic Monthly* published one of his poems in 1859. He and Howells, who had been similarly honored, collaborated in a slim volume of verse, *Poems by Two Friends*, appearing in 1860 at Columbus. The *Atlantic* reviewed it favorably as having escaped the "prevailing conventionalisms of verse" and possessing a "thorough Western flavor."<sup>22</sup> Piatt and his wife, Sarah Morgan Bryan, herself a talented poet, published *The Nests at Washington and Other Poems* in 1864 at Washington, D. C., where Piatt held a clerkship in the Treasury Department. After the war the Piatts resided at North Bend, near Cincinnati, while Piatt engaged in newspaper work, and several other volumes of poems appeared in these years. He was

<sup>21</sup> Emerson Venable, *Poets of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1912), 129-33, 165-9, 183-5, 224-5; Clare Dowler, "John James Piatt, Representative Figure of a Momentous Period," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XLV (1936), 1-26.

<sup>22</sup> *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston), V (Apr., 1860), 510-1.



librarian of the House of Representatives, 1871-1875, and later held consulates in Ireland. Most of Mrs. Piatt's writing was done after 1870. The Piatts and Kinney might have sung to wider audiences had they shown more of the sweetly sad sentimentality of the Cary sisters, or possessed the crusading spirit of Whittier, or affected the common touch of Will Carleton. Their artistry was never properly appreciated, though some of Mrs. Piatt's verse was warmly praised by London literary critics. In tribute to his old friend, Howells wrote in 1895 that in Piatt "the Middle West has its true poet."<sup>23</sup>

Howells himself was Ohio's most remarkable literary product in these rather barren years.<sup>24</sup> Born at Martin's Ferry, March 1, 1837, he was brought up in a printing office, since his father had edited newspapers at various places and operated the *Ashtabula Sentinel* at Jefferson for many years. Howells' early verse appeared in the *Ohio Farmer* and his real newspaper work was done on the *Cincinnati Gazette* and the *Ohio State Journal*. He wrote a campaign biography of Lincoln in 1860 and was appointed as American consul to Venice in 1861. Upon his return to the United States in 1865 he became associated with the *Nation* and then with the *Atlantic Monthly*, and ceased to be a citizen of Ohio, though his Buckeye years furnished much material for his later work. Abandoning poetry for prose, he became one of the major figures in American literature. It is rather a remarkable fact that Piatt, Howells, Kinney and Gallagher were all recipients of federal appointments from the Lincoln Administration, chiefly through the instrumentality of that high-placed Ohioan, Secretary of the Treasury Chase, a true friend and patron of letters.

One of the popular literary figures of the pre-war years was William Haines Lytle (1826-1863),<sup>25</sup> who served in the Mexican War, practiced law at Cincinnati, was an active figure in Democratic politics, and met his death in the Civil War. He wrote stirring declamatory verse on historical or martial themes, his "Antony and

<sup>23</sup> William D. Howells, *My Literary Passions* (New York, 1895), 58.

<sup>24</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, IX, 306-11.

<sup>25</sup> Emerson Venable, *Poets of Ohio*, 117-9.

Cleopatra," written in 1858, serving as a favorite vehicle for school-boy attempts at elocution. Four lines reveal its quality:

"I am dying, Egypt, dying!  
Ebbs the crimson life-tide fast,  
And the dark Plutonian shadows,  
Gather on the evening blast."

Not an Ohioan but claimed by Ohio because of several years' residence at Cincinnati was Thomas Buchanan Read (1822-1872),<sup>26</sup> painter and poet. It was in the Queen City that he composed "Sheridan's Ride," one of the Nation's most popular war-time poems. Also among Cincinnati's literati were William W. Fosdick (1825-1862) and Florus B. Plimpton (1830-1886), both native Ohioans whose verse was much esteemed in their day.<sup>27</sup> At Cleveland, Harvey Rice (1800-1891), lawyer and legislator, published a volume entitled *Mt. Vernon and Other Poems* in 1859.<sup>28</sup>

Among the female poets, Mrs. Helen Louisa Bostwick Bird (1826-1907) of Portage County, wrote much popular verse for periodicals over a long period,<sup>29</sup> while Mrs. Frances Dana Gage (1808-1884) found spare moments in her busy life as lecturer, reformer and journalist, to try her hand at rhymes on simple, domestic subjects.

The Civil War rudely shattered the soft sentimental themes, and the martial and patriotic key-note was sounded. The better known Ohio poets produced war poems but the results were rather ephemeral, except for Read's "Sheridan's Ride." "Drafted" by Mrs. Bostwick (later Mrs. Bird), one or two bits by John J. Piatt and some of Read's other verses had merit but did not strike fire. However, a host of unknowns rushed into the fray on both sides and the newspapers teemed with their products, more spirited than meritorious.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-1.

<sup>27</sup> W. H. Venable, *Literary Culture*, 114; Emerson Venable, *Poets of Ohio*, 153-6.

<sup>28</sup> W. H. Venable, *Literary Culture*, 282-3.

<sup>29</sup> Emerson Venable, *Poets of Ohio*, 106-7.

A few examples of this homespun verse follow:<sup>30</sup>

*The Union*

The Union, the Union  
The hope of the free  
Howso'er we may differ  
In this we agree.

Our glorious banner  
No traitor shall mar  
By effacing a stripe  
Or destroying a star.

Division: No, never  
The Union forever:  
And cursed be the hand  
That our country would sever.

(Three other stanzas)

*Ohio Statesman*, Dec. 29, 1861

*The Pen That Signed the Proclamation*

Three millions granted the right to their souls:  
This deed will shine on eternity's scrolls  
Only the signature's wanting now,  
Clearly written by him whose brow  
The ages shall crown with honor.

But American history will proudly tell  
How Abraham Lincoln felt the swell  
Of humanity's heart and when time was ripe  
Grasped his old steel pen with a manly gripe,  
And signed for a nation's honor.

(One more stanza)

*Cleveland Herald*, Jan. 21, 1863

<sup>30</sup> The author is indebted to Miss Helen M. Gallen of East High School, Columbus, for collecting the above examples of war-time verse from various Ohio newspapers.

*Vallandigham*

The great warm heart of Burke is thine,  
 Vallandigham! Vallandigham!  
 His love of peace, that love divine  
 Vallandigham! Vallandigham!  
 Illustrious Chatham spoke in thee  
 And generous Barre, bold and free—  
 Our first exile for liberty!  
 Vallandigham! Vallandigham!

*Logan Gazette* copied in *Cincinnati Enquirer*,  
 July 29, 1863

*Greenbacks*

Green be the back upon thee;  
 Thou pledge of happier days,  
 When bloody handed Treason  
 No more its hand shall raise;  
 But still from Maine to Texas  
 The Stars and Stripes shall wave  
 O'er the hearts and homes of freemen,  
 Nor mock one fettered slave.

(One other stanza)

*Toledo Blade*, June 18, 1864

A bitter diatribe against Lincoln's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus appears in this extract by W. A. Taylor:

"'Mong smoking cities and unnumbered dead!  
 Gone down! Shame on the very name of Freedom's sons!  
 Why hath Heaven light? Why must we stand and see,  
 Our liberties usurped by vandal hands  
 Because a tyrant faces the voices of the free?"

*Cincinnati Enquirer*, Sept. 25, 1863

The literary merits of the preceding extracts require no comment. The versifiers were propagandists who wrote to convince. Ohio literature was not advanced thereby.



The fiction of the Civil War generation followed the pattern of the poetry. It was sentimental and romantic, humorless and moralistic. Short stories, filling a column or two in the newspapers, best illustrate these characteristics. Novels were more difficult undertakings for the "leisure hour" writers, but Ohio produced its share of the mediocre fiction output of the period. Alice Cary from her New York residence was turning out novels and short stories based in part upon Ohio materials,<sup>31</sup> while Harriet Beecher Stowe, a former resident of Cincinnati, made use of her Ohio Valley background to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Howells did not begin to write fiction until after 1870.

Perhaps the best known Ohio writer of her own generation was Metta Victoria Fuller (Mrs. Orville J. Victor, 1831-1886) who wrote poems, stories and novels at an early age and was acclaimed as one of the brightest stars in western literature.<sup>32</sup> Her most popular novel, *The Senator's Son*, published in 1853, was an attempt to do for the temperance cause what Mrs. Stowe had done for the anti-slavery movement with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It went through six editions, thirty thousand copies being sold in England. In 1856 Miss Fuller married Orville J. Victor (1827-1910), a newspaper editor of Sandusky. They went to New York and embarked upon a unique and profitable joint literary career. Victor became chief editor of the Erastus Beadle enterprises, publishers of cheap popular books and magazines.<sup>33</sup> Under his supervision in 1860 a corps of Beadle writers began to turn out the first dime novels, soon to be sold by the millions to northern soldiers. While her husband receives the credit for inaugurating mass production of popular fiction, to Mrs. Victor goes the honor of having written the masterpiece of dime novels, *Maum Guinea and Her Plantation Children* (1861), a widely read book not without literary merit. Mrs. Victor turned out much popular fiction, and Victor wrote a four-volume history of the Civil War and a number of paper-backed biographies of American heroes,

<sup>31</sup> W. H. Venable, *Literary Culture*, 482-503.

<sup>32</sup> Coggeshall, *Poets and Poetry of the West*, 518-9.

<sup>33</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIX, 265-6.

but their work is forgotten today. Mrs. Victor's sister, Frances Fuller Victor (1826-1902), who had married O. J. Victor's brother, migrated to the Pacific Northwest and became an authority on the history of that region, contributing to Hubert Howe Bancroft's histories and producing other books.<sup>34</sup>

As examples of popular novels of Ohio origin may be mentioned *Malmiztic, the Toltec, and the Cavaliers of the Cross* (1851), by William W. Fosdick; *Mrs. Ben Darby, or the Weal and Woe of Social Life*, (1853), by Mrs. Maria Collins; and *Zoe, or, the Quadroon's Triumph* (1856), by Mrs. E. D. Livermore.

Among writers for children, Ohio produced Martha Finley (1828-1909),<sup>35</sup> who was born at Chillicothe but left her native State when a child. *Elsie Dinsmore* (1867), that masterpiece of priggery, was the first of a long series of children's books that came from her pen. Sarah Chauncey Woolsey ("Susan Coolidge," 1835-1905) was born and reared in Cleveland but went East at the age of twenty. She wrote her first girl's book, *The New Year's Bargain*, in 1871, followed by *What Katy Did* (1872) and many others. She also wrote poetry, stories and articles for eastern magazines.<sup>36</sup>

Into the stuffy, front parlor literary atmosphere of the fifties blew an invigorating breeze of genuine humor in 1857 when "Artemus Ward" (Charles Farrar Browne) was called to the staff of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*.<sup>37</sup> For three years his fictitious letters purporting to deal with the adventures of a traveling showman were copied by newspapers all over the country and read with huge enjoyment by thousands. He burlesqued in a kindly way the oddities and foibles of his generation, finding much of his material in that Ohio Yankeeland, the Western Reserve. Though born in Maine, he first gained fame in Ohio, leaving for New York in 1860 to become a magazine editor and presently a lecturer; he never returned to the Buckeye State.

More definitely of Ohio was David Ross Locke ("Petroleum V.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 390.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, XX, 518.

<sup>37</sup> Don Seitz, *Artemus Ward* (New York, 1919), 18-67.

Nasby"),<sup>38</sup> who was born in New York in 1833, became an itinerant printer at an early age, came to Ohio in 1852, and after serving on several northern and northwestern Ohio newspapers, joined the *Toledo Blade* in 1865, with which paper he was associated for most of his remaining years, first as editor, then as owner. The Nasby letters were begun by Locke in 1861 in the *Findlay Jeffersonian* and soon attracted wide attention. Locke made Nasby a whiskey-drinking, Negro-hating, selfish, unscrupulous Copperhead, whose bad spelling, ignorance and lack of any moral sense were grotesquely funny and powerfully effective as satire. In book form with Thomas Nast supplying the illustrations, the Nasby letters enjoyed a great vogue for many years, as Locke located his hero at "Confedrit X Roads" after the war and used him to caricature the unregenerate Democrats of post-war years. The *Blade* printed the Nasby letters in its columns from 1865 to Locke's death in 1888. The author was the greatest political satirist of the Civil War period, but he wrote for his own day, not for posterity, and posterity has almost forgotten him.

In an age when travel was necessarily limited for the great masses of people, books of travel were quite popular. Perhaps the greatest attraction for western lecture audiences was Bayard Taylor, whose writings of his trips to foreign lands had made his name a household word. Two Ohioans may be cited for contributions in this field. Samuel S. Cox described his European travels in *A Buckeye Abroad*, a book that sold well enough to reach its seventh edition in as many years. But Cox's facile pen led him into the newspaper field and thence into public office where his talent as a public speaker and his skill as a politician found a better outlet than that afforded by literature. William Dean Howells began his career as a prose writer in the 1860's by describing his years in Italy.

In the field of history Ohio produced no Prescotts, Irving or Bancrofts, for its historians were not writing for the American public but primarily for Ohio readers and on western subjects.

<sup>38</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, XI, 336; Osman Castle Hooper, *History of Ohio Journalism, 1793-1933* (Columbus, 1933), 159-62.

But this was their strength. They wrote, often from first hand information, of happenings but little removed from their own generation. Whatever their defects of style, their writing usually had genuine historical value. James W. Taylor, newspaper editor and State librarian, wrote one volume of a proposed three-volume history of Ohio that compares favorably with later works on the Indian and Revolutionary era.<sup>39</sup> He also prepared a useful history of the State's educational progress. In 1848 Dr. Samuel P. Hildreth wrote a pioneer history of the Ohio Valley, followed in 1852 by a volume entitled *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*. Judge James Hall of Cincinnati wrote both history and fiction on western subjects but active business life had virtually terminated his literary career by 1850.<sup>40</sup> His name will be long remembered for his earnest efforts to create a genuine western literature even before the pioneers had passed on. B. F. Morris's *Life of Thomas Morris* (1856), Edwin D. Mansfield's *Memoirs of the Life and Services of Daniel Drake* (1855) and William Dean Howell's campaign biography of Lincoln are illustrations of attempts at biographical writing in the antebellum decade.

Ohio's part in the Civil War was portrayed by Whitelaw Reid in a two-volume work, *Ohio in the War* (1867). Based in part upon Reid's first-hand knowledge of men and events, it became the standard work in its field. A flood of military histories and biographies followed in its wake.

Local historical societies made but slight contributions to historical progress, though their existence evidences a local pride and a feeling that Ohio's part in American development should not go unrecognized. The two best known organizations, "The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio," founded in 1831 at Columbus, and the "Cincinnati Historical Society," dating from 1844, merged in 1849 under the former name,<sup>41</sup> but the merger did not result in any increase in activity and the society was nearly moribund for

<sup>39</sup> James W. Taylor, *History of the State of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1854).

<sup>40</sup> Hall's *Romance of Western History* (Cincinnati, 1857) and *Legends of the West* (1854) were chiefly reprints of earlier writings.

<sup>41</sup> W. H. Venable, *Literary Culture*, 147-60.



many years. Not until 1872 did it resume its publications. Its library at Cincinnati, however, did not lose its value. At Norwalk the Firelands Historical Society published the *Firelands Pioneer* from 1858 to 1878. In Cleveland Charles Whittlesey and Charles C. Baldwin were the leading spirits in organizing a group of members of the Cleveland Library Association into a historical department in 1867. This became the Western Reserve Historical Society.<sup>42</sup>

In passing judgment upon Ohio's literature in this period the social historian and the literary critic will probably take opposite viewpoints. It is easy to make light of the productions of the antebellum writers but, on the other hand, they truly represented the transition stage of Ohio's cultural development. A new society was beginning to take root and a borrowed culture was being transformed into a native one. There are signs of the appearance of a cultured aristocracy with a genuine appreciation for the intellectual and artistic sides of man's nature. A true native literature might have resulted had economic and social life developed a greater stability. But Ohio had hardly passed from the pioneer stage of its intellectual growth before the Civil War and the revolution wrought by railroads and industrial development produced a rampant materialism which destroyed what the decades of the forties and fifties had created. In any case the "passionate provincialism"<sup>43</sup> of the antebellum years could scarcely have maintained itself in a State so situated as Ohio at the crossroads of the Nation. Doubtless this accessibility has contributed much to its great material progress but it is to be feared that something not to be measured in units of dollars and cents has been lost in the process.

The field of the fine arts, like literature, reflected the cultural strivings of a new society. Art was still somewhat unmasculine but artists were no longer regarded as oddities or freaks. The path to success, however, pointed east where training, recognition and financial remuneration drew western talent.

<sup>42</sup> D. W. Manchester, "Historical Sketch of the Western Reserve Historical Society," *Western Reserve Historical Society Publications* (Cleveland), III (1892), 121-65.

<sup>43</sup> W. H. Venable, "Ohio Literary Men and Women," Emilius O. Randall and Daniel J. Ryan, *History of Ohio* (New York, 1912), V, 4.

Sculptors were hard pressed to make a living west of the Alleghenies. Ohio's greatest gift to American sculpture, John Quincy Adams Ward, then at the beginning of his career,<sup>44</sup> returned to his native State in 1860 to do a bust of Dr. Lincoln Goodale (now in Goodale Park) at Columbus and to attempt to interest the legislature in an appropriation for a statue of Simon Kenton.<sup>45</sup> The war ended his hopes in the latter project and he returned to New York. Thomas D. Jones, a New Yorker by birth but for some years a resident of Licking County, failing to secure recognition in the East, made a precarious living in Ohio modelling busts of prominent citizens, almost the only outlet for an aspiring sculptor to acquire cash. He did portrait busts of Chase, General Harrison, Corwin, Ewing, Clay and General Taylor. When war memorials were in vogue in the post-war years, Jones did a Lincoln memorial for the State House but was said to have lost money on his contract.<sup>46</sup> He began his career as a stone mason and was always handicapped by a lack of proper training in art. A picturesque and entertaining individual, he attracted attention as much by his personality as by his sculpture.

The most admired object of art in these years was the "Greek Slave" of Hiram Powers, whose road to fame started in Cincinnati.<sup>47</sup> When exhibited in Ohio, the figure attracted large crowds, drawn more likely by its well-advertised nudity than by its artistic beauty. Ladies, usually in groups with no males present, were admitted to see it, evincing "good taste and an absence of prudery," said the courageous Cleveland *Herald*.<sup>48</sup>

Cincinnati acquired in 1871 one of the finest public monuments of any city in the Nation for this period.<sup>49</sup> Henry Probasco, one of its most public-spirited citizens, presented to the city the Tyler Davidson Fountain, a memorial to his brother-in-law. It was designed by a German, August Von Kreling, and was cast at Munich

<sup>44</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 198.

<sup>45</sup> Howells, *Years of My Youth*, 215-9, discusses Ward and Jones.

<sup>46</sup> Edna M. Clark, *Ohio Art and Artists* (Richmond, Va., 1932), 140-1.

<sup>47</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 197-8.

<sup>48</sup> Oct. 16, 1850.

<sup>49</sup> Kenny, *Illustrated Cincinnati*, 109-19.



6. CONTEMPORARY SKETCH OF TYLER DAVIDSON FOUNTAIN



at the Royal Bronze Foundry, the fountain itself costing \$105,000. It was unveiled October 6, 1871, before a huge crowd. The fountain and the famous suspension bridge of John A. Roebling, opened in 1867, were the two things which every visitor to the Queen City felt impelled to see and of which it was proudest.

Cleveland's first public monument was unveiled in 1860, a statue to Oliver Hazard Perry, naval hero of the War of 1812. The sculptor, William Walcutt, was born in Columbus in 1819, first took up painting, spent several years in Europe, then turned his attention to sculpture.<sup>50</sup> In Columbus he did a statue of Dr. Samuel Smith the well-known Columbus physician. This statue was originally placed at Broad and High streets but was eventually removed to St. Francis Hospital.

Painting had more devotees and was better appreciated than sculpture. Almost every city of any size had its commercial portrait painter, though the rapid advance of photography was reducing their sources of income. Those who sought fame with the brush may have found initial encouragement in Ohio's metropolis but the East and Europe were their ultimate goals. Of the rather brilliant group who worked at Cincinnati around 1840,<sup>51</sup> hardly a one was more than a temporary resident or occasional visitor after 1850, except James H. Beard.<sup>52</sup>

William H. Powell, under authority of an act of the assembly in 1857, painted "The Battle of Lake Erie," or "Perry's Victory," a work requiring several years for its completion and for which he received ten thousand dollars, twice the original appropriation.<sup>53</sup> It was hung in the new Capitol building.

Of the others of the old Cincinnati group, John Frankenstein had turned to portrait sculpture, Godfrey N. Frankenstein was alternating between Niagara Falls and his Springfield home, Thomas Worthington Whittredge and William L. Sonntag had established themselves in the East, and Thomas Buchanan Read was but a

<sup>50</sup> Clark, *Ohio Art and Artists*, 114, 139-40.

<sup>51</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 199.

<sup>52</sup> Cist, *Cincinnati in 1859*, 202-5.

<sup>53</sup> Clark, *Ohio Art and Artists*, 77.



part-time resident of Cincinnati in the 1860's after a long absence. Beard, J. O. Eaton, William Miller, John Insko Williams and some others still painted in the Queen City, while J. O. Witt at Columbus, Archibald M. Willard at Cleveland (painter of "The Spirit of '76"), and others had local reputations, chiefly as portrait painters.<sup>54</sup>

Williams, born in Dayton in 1813, was known especially for his panoramas of Bible history, exhibited all over the country. Godfrey Frankenstein's panorama of Niagara Falls was also popular. The "art unions" that existed at Cincinnati, Sandusky and other places in the pre-war years purchased paintings and statuary to be awarded to subscribers by a lottery. They enjoyed widespread popularity but the lottery feature brought about their discontinuance.

The West generally preferred pictures and statuary in the form of reproductions of the old masters, for Americans were in tutelage to Europe in their art. Not until after the Civil War did American art begin to stand alone. In Ohio the 1870's were brilliant years in the history of painting, but the two preceding decades were rather barren. The *Cincinnati Gazette's* comments in 1850 may have been too pessimistic in order to arouse its readers, but at least art was languishing. "Even now," it declared, "there are artists of high merit among us, who, frequently, if they know where to get a good supper after leaving their easels, have not the means to do it with—all for the lack of that sort of encouragement they should receive in the American Home of Art."<sup>55</sup>

A local interest in painting and drawing is evidenced by the existence of "sketch clubs" at Cleveland and Cincinnati in 1860,<sup>56</sup> but art magazines soon folded up. *Pen and Pencil* (1853), *Western Art Journal* (1855), and the *Sketch Club* (1860), all Cincinnati publications, each expired in the year of its birth.

However, efforts to establish a school of design bore fruit. An

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*.

<sup>55</sup> Jan. 5, 1850.

<sup>56</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Apr. 2, May 28, 1860; *Cleveland Leader*, Feb. 20, Mar. 10, 1860.

attempt to set up such a school in connection with a "Ladies' Gallery of Fine Arts" in Cincinnati under the patronage of Mrs. Sarah Worthington King Peter in 1854 ended in failure, but the paintings and plaster casts provided for it were passed on to a class under Charles T. Webber, a local artist. Out of this grew the McMicken School of Design, organized in 1869 to give training in art.<sup>57</sup> Later this became the Art Academy associated with the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Some of the colleges were establishing departments of fine arts to teach drawing and painting but the training was superficial. These and the female academies looked upon art as a parlor occupation for cultured ladies whose gentility did not permit household tasks and roughened hands.

Music, with its wide appeal to all classes, rested on a solid popular support. The throngs that turned out to hear the glorious Jenny Lind at Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus in 1851 were not all musical devotees,<sup>58</sup> for P. T. Barnum's management was enough to draw crowds to anything he exhibited. Nevertheless, the popularity of other artists such as Ole Bull, Theresa Parodi, Adelina Patti and Maurice Strakosch, and the number of concerts sponsored in the smaller cities are proof of the existence of an appreciative Ohio musical public. More popular in character were the minstrel shows, with their Negro melodies, and the singers of the sentimental songs of love and sorrow, for this was the hey-day of Stephen Foster, who was himself a resident of Ohio for a brief period. One may read in the newspapers of the Ethiopian Serenaders, the Apollo Minstrels, Sliter's Empire Minstrels, Mason's Metropolitan Serenaders, Kunkle's Nightingales and a host of others in black face, who danced and sang and provided jokes and repartee to delight listeners in small towns as well as in the State's metropolis.

While the African furnished the inspiration for minstrel melodies, the Germans of the cities were organizing their Männerchors and holding their annual Sängerbunds to preserve in the new en-

<sup>57</sup> Clark, *Ohio Art and Artists*, 79, 82; Anna Shannon McAllister, *In Winter We Flourish* (New York, 1939), 210 ff.

<sup>58</sup> Cincinnati Gazette, Apr. 17, 1851; Ohio State Journal, Oct. 30, Nov. 3, 1851.

vironment their characteristic German love of song. Needless to say, Cincinnati was the Teutonic musical center.<sup>59</sup> The Männerchor was organized there in 1857 from the union of three earlier societies. It began to produce operas in 1860 and women were then admitted, but the opera question produced dissensions and a secession resulted in 1868, the seceders organizing the Orpheus. A double quartet withdrew in 1872 to set up the Germania Männerchor composed of a few active members and a large passive list. The St. Cecelia Männerchor of German Catholics was organized in 1867. Cincinnati's cultural life was enriched by her immigrants.

Outside the German groups Cincinnati had the Harmonic Society, which was founded in 1859, and which supplied the choirs of the May Musical Festivals. The Cincinnati Orchestra was struggling to establish itself in 1872-1873. "John Church and Company," music publishers, and "Rudolph Wurlitzer and Brothers," importers and manufacturers of musical instruments, were important names in their fields by 1870.

Music had been introduced into the public schools in Cincinnati, Dayton and Cleveland by 1851, and other places were soon following their lead. Special music schools appeared around 1865, Oberlin's conservatory claiming priority over the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, established in 1867. Within the next two decades Ohio had five of the dozen in the eastern part of the country.<sup>60</sup>

"Vocalizing" and piano music were taught even in the smaller places, and some had bands composed of local talent. McConnellsville in 1866 boasted of its "Silver Cornet Band" with new instruments valued at six hundred dollars. Though not on a railroad it was visited by minstrel shows and on at least one occasion by a violinist of some repute who gave a concert.<sup>61</sup>

A "Mendelssohn Society" was organized at Cleveland in 1850.

<sup>59</sup> Kenny, *Illustrated Cincinnati*, 91-3, 150-1, 187-8, summarizes Cincinnati's musical interests.

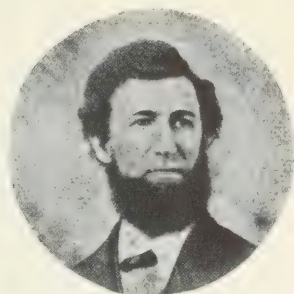
<sup>60</sup> Mary Hubbell Osburn, *Ohio Composers and Musical Authors* (Columbus, 1942), 11-2.

<sup>61</sup> The author is indebted to Robert H. Bremner, a graduate student in history at the Ohio State University, for the use of a paper, "Morgan County, 1865-1870."

According to the *Herald*, this was the first musical society in that city since 1838.<sup>62</sup> Others appeared with the city's growth.

Two Ohioans wrote popular songs that won national recognition. A student at Otterbein College, Westerville, wrote the familiar "Darling Nellie Gray" in 1856.<sup>63</sup>

Benjamin Russel Hanby was born in Rushville, Fairfield County, in 1833, graduated from Otterbein in 1858, and after a brief period as pastor of a United Brethren Church at Lewisburg, made song writing his profession. He composed school and Sunday School songs for the John Church Company, Cincinnati, then for Root and Cady at Chicago, where he contributed many tunes and words to a musical periodical. His death in 1867 ended a career of much promise. "Ole Shady," the "song of the contraband" written in 1861, was popular with the soldiers, was a favorite of General Sherman's, and was sung for many years after the war. "Now Den, Now Den," was composed at the close of the war to encourage the former slaves to go back to work. To Hanby also is attributed the popular Christmas song for children, "Up on the Housetop." His most famous hymn, "Who Is He?" found a place in the hymn books of the Church of England and is included in many other collections.



7. BENJAMIN R. HANBY

Daniel Decatur Emmett achieved immortality by composing "Dixie."<sup>64</sup> Emmett was born at Mt. Vernon, Knox County, in 1815. He received but a small amount of formal schooling and enlisted in the army at the age of seventeen where he played the fife and drum. After his term of service he became a band musician with circuses. In 1843, he organized one of the first minstrel troupes and

<sup>62</sup> Dec. 30, 1850.

<sup>63</sup> Charles B. Galbreath, "Song Writers of Ohio," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XIV (1905), 180-215. The author is indebted to Brainerd Oaks Hanby, son of Benjamin R. Hanby, for a pamphlet containing material about his parents. Mrs. Dacia Custer Shoemaker, curator of the Hanby House Memorial in Westerville and Earl R. Hoover of Cleveland have much material on Hanby.

<sup>64</sup> Galbreath, "Song Writers of Ohio," *O. S. A. H. Quar.* XIII (1904), 504-50; Galbreath, *Daniel Decatur Emmett, Author of Dixie* (Columbus, 1904). For other Ohio composers see Osburn, *Ohio Composers and Musical Authors*, 15 ff.



thereafter was associated with minstrelsy until his retirement from



8. DANIEL DECATUR EMMETT

minstrel shows, panoramas, lectures and church revivals, and bearing a certain weight of opprobrium from the "moral" element of the community, had a rather checkered career. Edwin Booth, James Murdock, Julia Dean, James H. Hackett, Eliza Logan, Maggie Mitchell, Lola Montez, Charlotte Cushman, Julia Bennett and other well-known stage stars visited Ohio and generally drew good houses. On the other hand, the local stock companies in the large cities, in support of these visiting "stars," were often of inferior calibre, while the traveling companies that played the smaller places were usually quite mediocre. Cincinnati, with three theaters and two music halls in 1860, and five theaters by 1872, was offered a varied entertainment of farces, melodramas, minstrel shows, concerts, panoramas, Shakespearean plays and even an occasional opera.<sup>65</sup> But even here

the stage. While connected with the Bryant Minstrels in 1859, he was asked by the manager one Saturday night to write a "walk-around" of the plantation type for Monday rehearsal. The result was "Dixie," written in New York. Many stanzas were added to the original and other versions were written to be sung to the music of "Dixie" during the war, but Emmett was the creator of the original song. He died at Mt. Vernon in 1904.

The drama, compelled to compete with concerts,

<sup>65</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Jan. 7, Mar. 6, 1860; Kenny, *Illustrated Cincinnati*, 37-42.

there were complaints that the drama was declining due to the failure of the "star" system and the poor calibre of the stock companies. Cleveland's one theater devoted to dramatic offerings in 1860 was closed much of the time.<sup>66</sup> Two were in operation ten years later, but a large "opera house" was needed and plans were being made for its construction in 1873.

The widespread popularity of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" reflects the state of the drama in Ohio and, indeed, the whole North. Here were the elements of melodrama, pathos, humor, sentimentality, villainy and heroism, and humanitarian uplift skilfully blended. High and low, the cultured and the ignorant alike, laughed at Topsy's antics and wept over little Eva's demise and Uncle Tom's sufferings. Indeed, its influence upon the slavery controversy can hardly be overestimated. Yet its cultural value was probably slight. Like the theater-goers of other generations, the audiences of the 1850's wanted only to be entertained. Cynicism, realism and sophistication had no appeal for them. Simple virtues, pleasing sentiments, a few tears, villainy confounded, and an aura of romance over all, these constituted a popular novel or play. Drama catered primarily to popular taste. How far it contributed to intellectual progress is a moot question. However, the fact that the plays of Shakespeare, Sheridan, Bulwer and the better known English dramatists constituted an important part of the repertoire of the leading actors of the period is the best evidence that the standards of the 1850's are not to be held in contempt at the present day.

Science, particularly in its more practical aspects, had made some progress. Dr. Daniel Drake had led the way with the publication of his valuable work on the diseases of the interior valley of North America, but his versatility went beyond the medical field and he has been denominated by Venable as the "Franklin of Cincinnati."<sup>67</sup> He died in 1852. Belonging more to the generation of the fifties and sixties was Jared P. Kirtland of Cleveland, physician, naturalist and enthusiastic pioneer in the field of scientific agriculture,<sup>68</sup> while

<sup>66</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Jan. 12, Apr. 14, 1860; Feb. 10, 27, 1872; Aug. 16, 21, 22, 23, 1873.

<sup>67</sup> W. H. Venable, *Literary Culture*, 299-322.

<sup>68</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 206.

another Clevelander, Charles Whittlesey, was one of the State's best known geologists as well as an archaeologist of repute and an authority on western history.<sup>69</sup> Devoted to science as an end in itself were General Ormsby M. Mitchell, lecturer and writer of popular works on astronomy, and founder of the famous observatory at Cincinnati, who lost his life in military service in 1862, and William S. Sullivant of Columbus, a botanist whose work won recognition from the noted Asa Gray of Harvard.<sup>70</sup> Another botanist of more than local fame was a Lancaster physician, Dr. John M. Bigelow, who accompanied the commission to locate the United States-Mexican boundary, 1850-1853, and who was surgeon and botanist to the expedition to survey a route for a Pacific railroad in 1853-1854.

Colleges and universities in Ohio contributed little to the advancement of science, for their interests lay in other directions, but in almost every community were individuals, often deficient in formal education, who were engaged in that most practical phase of science, the field of invention. The appearance in 1858 of the *Scientific Artisan*, a weekly published at Cincinnati by the American Patent Company, is significant of the wide interest felt in labor-saving machines and new devices of all kinds, and of the ambitions of would-be inventors to secure patents on them. Cincinnati, most progressive of western cities, built and tried out the first steam fire engine in 1852, the work of a mechanic, Abel Shawk, and experimented with steam for street railway transportation at the close of the decade.<sup>71</sup> However, the city council, by a vote of 4 to 26, refused to permit steam cars to operate as they frightened horses, endangered lives and disturbed slumbers. But the great inventions of this generation were not the work of Ohioans. Perhaps Ohio's greatest claim to fame in this field lies in the fact that Thomas A. Edison was born in the State at Milan in 1847.

<sup>69</sup> C. C. Baldwin, "Memorial of Colonel Charles Whittlesey," *Western Reserve Historical Society Tracts* (Cleveland), II, No. 68 (1887).

<sup>70</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 206; A. E. Waller, "Dr. John Milton Bigelow, 1804-1878, An Early Ohio Physician-Botanist," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, LI (1942), 313-31.

<sup>71</sup> Cist, *Cincinnati in 1859*, 355-7; *Cincinnati Commercial*, Mar. 9, 23, Nov. 1, 1860.

Among the ablest statisticians and practical economists in the country was Edward Deering Mansfield (1801-1880).<sup>72</sup> Educated at West Point and Princeton, lawyer and teacher and editor by turns, he possessed an intellectual equipment and a practical training almost unequalled in the West. While his pen with equal facility wrote newspaper articles and books of a historical, biographical and educational character, he was mainly occupied with his duties as editor of the *Railroad Record* and as State Commissioner of Statistics, an office created in 1857. No one possessed a wider knowledge of Ohio's economic growth and prospects or recorded his facts with greater care. His reports as Commissioner of Statistics are invaluable to the historian and economist today. In a more limited field, and for the benefit primarily of the business man, Charles Cist of Cincinnati pictured the economic and social life of that place in his commercial newspaper, *Cist's Advertiser*, and in his volumes recording the city's development at different periods. David Christy wrote several books and pamphlets on the slavery question and cotton production, colored by his position as agent of the American Colonization Society in Ohio.

Though the contributions of Ohio's scientists, inventors and practical economists seem to have been small in the aggregate, they are indications of definite progress in a State but little more than a generation from the backwoods. Astrology, phrenology and hypnotism had many advocates, but the interest shown in such things was, after all, a favorable sign. Curiosity about the false may lead to a knowledge of the truth. Furthermore, the rather general scepticism of the newspapers toward the lecturers on phrenology, then quite popular, was a hopeful indication of the spread of enlightenment.

The role of the State government in the advancement of science was confined to the revival of the Geological Survey, first created in 1837 but left without funds after two years. Under Governor Hayes in 1869 it again functioned with Professor John S. Newberry (1822-1892) of Columbia University, but formerly of Cleveland,

<sup>72</sup> W. H. Venable, *Literary Culture*, 409-35.



in charge.<sup>73</sup> His scientific career had begun with the study and practice of medicine in the Western Reserve but geology and paleontology eventually absorbed his interests. Assisting him in the survey were Professor E. B. Andrews of Marietta College, Professor Edward Orton, Sr., president of Antioch College and presently the head of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College, and John H. Klippart, secretary of the State Board of Agriculture. The first of a series of volumes appeared in 1873.

<sup>73</sup> J. S. Newberry, *Report of the Geological Survey of Ohio, I, Geology and Paleontology* (Columbus, 1873). Part I, 1-15, historical sketch.

## CHAPTER VII

# Education, the Professions and the Churches

ONE of the clearest indications of intellectual progress in the United States in the 1850's is found in the advance of popular education. The battle for free public schools had been won in the democratic upheaval of the preceding decades coincident with the triumph of Jacksonian Democracy, and the principle of state-supported, common schools was now firmly established.<sup>1</sup> But in practice the ideals of the educational reformers were far from being realized. The extent and character of state aid, the organization of the school system, and an adequate supply of trained teachers were practical problems that had to be solved before the democratic ideal of equality of opportunity for all could be achieved. These matters came to a head in Ohio in the period 1850-1860.

An active agitation for reform was begun and kept up by the teachers themselves. The period from 1840 to 1845 was one of reaction, but in the latter year Samuel Galloway, as secretary of state, played a more active role than his predecessors and agitation received a new impetus.<sup>2</sup> Teachers' institutes made their appearance in the State in 1845, and in 1846 the *Ohio School Journal*, published at Kirtland by Asa Dearborn Lord, issued its first number. A State convention, held at Akron, December 31, 1847, resulted in the formation of a State teachers' association which from this time on played an important part in educational progress. In 1850 it employed Lorin Andrews as its agent to travel over the State and spread the gospel of reform. In 1851 it created as its

<sup>1</sup> Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850*, Carl Wittke, ed., *The History of the State of Ohio* (Columbus), III (1941), 165-72.

<sup>2</sup> James W. Taylor, *A Manual of the Ohio School System* (Cincinnati, 1857), 354-95.

official organ the *Ohio Journal of Education* which began publication the next year with A. D. Lord (whose earlier attempt along this line had not succeeded) as its editor.

The adoption of the new Constitution brought matters to a head. The Constitutional Convention had dealt with education only in general terms, leaving wide latitude for the legislature to handle the problem. The reforming spirit pervaded the first assembly under the new fundamental law, and education, with other reforms, received careful consideration. By the act of March 14, 1853, the goal of the progressives was achieved in almost every respect.<sup>3</sup> This measure displaced all preceding enactments on the subject of education and gave to the State a simplified school code, possibly two-thirds of the act being only a codification of existing laws. In certain important respects it changed the common school system for the better. These changes may be summed up as follows: 1. A State school tax of two mills in place of the existing mixed State and county levies, the proceeds to be distributed among the counties in proportion to the number of children of school age. 2. The township, outside incorporated towns, under a township board of education to be the local unit of organization for rural districts in place of the old district. The district boards were not abolished but their powers and duties were greatly curtailed. Among other things the township board was required to maintain schools in operation for seven months each year. 3. The establishment of school libraries through a special State tax levy. 4. A State commissioner of common schools to supervise the system. He was to be elected by the voters for a three-year term.

The new school law was the work of Harvey Rice, Democratic senator from Cleveland, but he had consulted freely with teachers and others interested in educational reform in compiling the measure.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, its leading features had been advocated for several years by various teachers' conventions and educational leaders as well as governors, secretaries of state and members of the legis-

<sup>3</sup> Ohio Laws, *Acts*, 50 Assemb., 2 Sess., LI (1853), 429-53.

<sup>4</sup> Taylor, *Ohio School System*, 220; William J. Akers, *Cleveland Schools in the Nineteenth Century* (Cleveland, 1901), 365.

lature at different times. The law was the product of years of experience with an unsatisfactory system together with the democratic reforming spirit that permeated the State around 1850. The idea of free public education was very generally accepted in theory and had been given official sanction as early as the 1820's but it remained for the generation of the 1850's to appreciate its true significance and, blessed with greater economic resources, to place it on a firm, practical basis.

However, opposition speedily showed itself. The most extreme critics of the new system were found among Roman Catholics, whose center was at Cincinnati, residence of Archbishop John B. Purcell. Their hostility was really directed against the principle underlying the bill, that the State should maintain through taxation non-sectarian public schools. They would have preferred a share of the common school fund for their parochial schools or at least exemption from taxation for school purposes where the taxpayer was contributing to the church school. A public letter from Archbishop Purcell when the school bill was before the legislature produced a wave of protest throughout the State and stirred up at Cincinnati an anti-Catholic movement that affected the April city election and was a factor in making that place a hot-bed of Know-Nothingism the following year.<sup>5</sup> Yet in some ways the archbishop had a strong case. He contended that the public schools were themselves sectarian, that only the Protestant Bible was permitted in them, that the teachers were sectarian in viewpoint, and that the books used were open to the same criticism. Certainly the Bible—and this meant the Protestant version—was freely used in the public schools while the teachers were almost invariably Protestants and quite often Protestant ministers or former ministers. Occasionally the school even aided the local churches in their revivals. James Ford Rhodes, the historian, tells of an instance in his boyhood when prayer-meetings were held by a minister and the teacher in the school-room after school hours in an effort to save the souls of the

<sup>5</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Mar. 29, 1853; *Cincinnati Gazette*, March-April, 1853.



pupils.<sup>6</sup> This was in Cleveland in 1858. The State teachers' association wanted school authorities to insist on the daily use of the Bible in the classroom.<sup>7</sup> Naturally enough many Catholics resented such things and felt that it justified their claim for a share of the public school funds.

Roman Catholics, however, constituted a small minority whose wishes could be overridden by the Protestant majority. Far more dangerous to the new system were those conservatives who saw with alarm the rising costs of education at public expense. Probably some felt as did "X Y Z" who wrote to the Zanesville *Courier* his objections to "being robbed to pay for the education of my neighbor's child" and to "robbing my neighbor to pay for the education of mine."<sup>8</sup> Most of the opponents of the reform, however, accepted the principle of free public education but objected to the increased taxes and the greater centralization of authority involved in the new system. So influential a paper as the *Ohio Statesman* attacked the school law as burdensome to the taxpayers and undemocratic as well.<sup>9</sup> The legislature, elected in 1853, was presented with 41 petitions signed by 1,733 names, praying the alteration or repeal of the Act of 1853.<sup>10</sup> But only nine counties were represented on the petitions and a majority of the signers came from two counties, Ashtabula and Richland. The new State Commissioner of Common Schools, Hiram H. Barney, answered the petitioners in a masterly report in defense of the new system, and the legislature did not disturb the law. In view of an increased tax duplicate due to a revaluation of real estate, the State levy was reduced, at Governor Medill's suggestion, from two mills to one and a half.<sup>11</sup>

The new system continued under the fire of its critics for the rest of the decade. The legislature was petitioned to abolish the office of State school commissioner, to limit the taxing powers of

<sup>6</sup> James F. Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850* (New York, 1893-1906), III, 455.

<sup>7</sup> *Ohio Journal of Education* (Columbus), VI (1857), 35.

<sup>8</sup> Mar. 22, 1853.

<sup>9</sup> Mar. 22, 30, Apr. 5, Aug. 8, 1853.

<sup>10</sup> Taylor, *Ohio School System*, 391-2.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 296-7.

the township boards, to repeal the library provision, and to make other changes in the system. Perhaps the two most unpopular features of the school organization were the district libraries and the high schools. The libraries were regarded as unnecessary luxuries, the choice of books by the State commissioner was severely criticised, and it was charged that many volumes were lost or stolen and that communities received little benefit from the system.<sup>12</sup> For two years, 1856-1857, the tax for this purpose was suspended only to be restored by the next assembly, but by 1860 the opposition was too widespread to be resisted and the library tax was abolished. The rural districts, bent on decreasing their tax burdens, were largely responsible, though the support given the repealers by such an important paper as the Cincinnati *Commercial* indicates that some cities, satisfied with their own library facilities, regarded the State tax as unnecessary and burdensome.<sup>13</sup> For seven years the schools had no funds for library maintenance or for new books.

The high school, on the other hand, won its battle after a hard fight. It was not provided for by a special levy but the matter was left to each township or municipality to decide for itself. The high school was an innovation of the previous decade, appearing first in the cities where a large degree of local independence was permitted in educational organization. It encountered much hostility, many friends of the common schools believing that the high school was an expensive educational luxury for the benefit of the few. Commissioner Barney, nevertheless, was able to report the existence of 57 high schools in 1854 on the basis of very incomplete statistics. By 1860 the number had reached 161 and the system was securely established in principle.<sup>14</sup> It was not, however, acceptable as yet to the rural districts. State Commissioner of Statistics Edward D. Mansfield reported in 1859 that "all education, however, above the primary branches, is confined to the few, and those few con-

<sup>12</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Jan., 1860; *Ohio Farmer*, VII, 140 (May 1, 1858); *Cadiz Sentinel*, Jan. 18, Mar. 7, 1860.

<sup>13</sup> *Ohio Educational Monthly* (Columbus), IX, New Series, I (1860), 118-20. It was the successor of the *Ohio Journal of Education*.

<sup>14</sup> State Commissioner of Common Schools, *Annual Report, 1854* (Columbus, 1855), 72-3; *ibid.*, 1860, 16. Twenty-two counties had no high schools in 1860.

fined to the large towns. . . . It is only in dense populations, and those wealthy, where a system of academical instruction can be carried on, at public expense.”<sup>15</sup> It remained for the next generation to overcome this obstacle.

In general, the close of the decade was marked by reactionary tendencies. Besides repealing the library tax, the legislature had before it some twenty bills to modify the school system. If half of these had passed, it would have been wrecked.<sup>16</sup> One of the most serious was a proposal to return to each county the amount raised there by the State levy. Cincinnati, aggrieved at paying out so much more than she received, was behind the measure.<sup>17</sup> The house committee on schools reported against the bill, however, on the logical ground that wealth and children were not distributed by counties in the same proportion and that the wealthier centers should assist the poorer ones.<sup>18</sup> In some of the smaller cities there were signs of hostility to the high school and to the office of superintendent for financial reasons, while the teachers themselves seemed to have lost much of the enthusiasm and crusading spirit of the early years.<sup>19</sup> The decrease in the number of teachers' institutes was a significant symptom. But, except for the repeal of the library tax, these reactionary tendencies had slight effect. The system remained substantially as established in 1853.

The period of the 1860's saw no very significant advances in legislation. A minimum school year of thirty weeks was established by law in 1861 but this was reduced to twenty-four weeks in 1865 and not changed again for many years.<sup>20</sup> Compulsory school attendance, much discussed around 1857 and advocated by Anson Smyth, State school commissioner, fell by the wayside and was not revived until the 1870's.<sup>21</sup> With fewer than half the children of school age in

<sup>15</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report, 1859* (Columbus, 1860), 80.

<sup>16</sup> *Ohio Educational Monthly*, New Series, I, 121.

<sup>17</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Feb. 13, 1860.

<sup>18</sup> *Ohio Educational Monthly*, New Series I, 88-91.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-6.

<sup>20</sup> Nelson L. Bossing, "History of Educational Legislation in Ohio, 1851-1925", *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XXXIX (1930), 151.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 137-8.

regular daily attendance, the problem was a serious one. One definite gain was the restoration of the school library tax in 1867.

The machinery created in 1853 soon began to get out of gear. The local sub-district boards, deprived of most of their power by the act of that year, resented their subordination to the township boards and much friction resulted.<sup>22</sup> The former in practice asserted far more authority than the law intended, producing confusion and lack of uniformity in the system. Conditions in the city, village and special districts, not under the township boards, were better, but the rapid growth of cities required a further classification in 1873 with ten thousand population as the line of division for the two types of city districts.

School books and courses of study, by the law of 1853, were to be determined by the school boards of each locality. In spite of the lack of uniformity, the subjects were much the same in the elementary schools, namely, reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, grammar and geography, supplemented by vocal music, drawing, United States history, and a few other subjects.<sup>23</sup> The high school curriculum showed an amazing variety of offerings ranging from such staples as algebra and Latin to such collegiate subjects as trigonometry, moral philosophy, Greek and surveying. The line between high school and elementary school was not sharply drawn, while the term "graded school" had different meanings in different localities. Local control, the heritage of frontier days, was not disturbed for many years.

Despite their controversial character educational problems did not become questions of party politics. In the main, all parties supported the school law, nor were the criticisms later directed against certain features of it subjects for party differences. Only over the election of the State school commissioner was politics involved. In 1853 the State Teachers' Association, desirous of making the office non-partisan in character, indorsed Lorin Andrews as its choice and expected both parties to accept him.<sup>24</sup> The Whigs made

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ohio Journal of Education*, II, 284-92.



no nomination but generally supported Andrews. The State organ of the Free Democrats, or Free Soilers, also approved the teachers' choice and most of the voters of that party followed its lead.<sup>25</sup> The Democrats, however, distrustful of Andrews because he was a Whig, proceeded to name their own candidate, Hiram H. Barney, a Cincinnati teacher. Next to the excitement over the temperance issue the contest between Andrews and Barney aroused the liveliest interest in the campaign of 1853. The struggle soon became sharply partisan between Whigs and Democrats. Barney was elected, and though not the teachers' choice, proved to be an able and energetic official. But from this time on the office was regarded as a partisan one and each party made nominations accordingly. The State Teachers' Association no longer made any effort to control it.

Although the public school became the vital factor in the educational life of the State, the private school continued to flourish. The existence of 135 private and parochial schools in 1859 with 16,132 pupils is sufficient proof of this.<sup>26</sup> The important Catholic element in the population made certain the permanence of the church-controlled type of education. In the field of secondary education, though the public high school was gaining ground, academies and seminaries were still highly regarded, and in some communities offered the sole means for an education beyond the primary branches. From somewhat incomplete statistics, the number of seminaries and academies in 1859 was placed at 90, with a total of 404 teachers and 8,221 pupils. The public high schools numbered 151 with 261 teachers and 10,518 pupils. The difference was much greater by 1870 when there were over two hundred high schools, five hundred teachers, and some twenty-three thousand pupils enrolled.<sup>27</sup> The academy group had declined in numbers and pupil enrollment over the earlier totals and was hard pressed to compete with the public school.

One development in this field was viewed with mixed feelings

<sup>25</sup> *Ohio Columbian*, Apr. 14, May 5, Sept. 1, 28, 1853.

<sup>26</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report, 1859*, 82-3, 133-4.

<sup>27</sup> Compiled from statistics in the *Annual Report* of the State Commissioner of Common Schools for 1871, especially pages 16, 22, 150-5.

by educators. This was the rapid increase of business colleges, or commercial schools. Nine were mentioned in the report of the State school commissioner for 1866, showing an enrollment of 2,622 in seven of these,<sup>28</sup> but the figures were incomplete. Teachers of bookkeeping and penmanship were found in most towns of any size, and sometimes the "business college" was a one-man affair whose life span ended when the "faculty" found the undertaking unprofitable. In the better ones the course could be completed in not more than six months and sometimes in three, but the results were questionable. School Commissioner John A. Norris charged that from one-third to one-half the boys who graduated from commercial schools were injured rather than benefited by their attendance.<sup>29</sup> He listed among the major defects that needed to be remedied, the lack of any standards for admission, the early age at which students were admitted, the haste with which the courses were completed, and the assurance given the graduates that they were now prepared for commercial pursuits. He favored a minimum age limit of eighteen for admission, a thorough familiarity with the elementary branches as a requirement, and a course of technical studies lasting at least six months, but preferably one year.

The better schools attempted to conform to these standards. As an example may be cited Van Sickle's Practical Business College, founded by J. W. Van Sickle at Springfield in 1871.<sup>30</sup> The course lasted six months to a year and was divided into theoretical and practical departments. Bookkeeping for every type of business from banking and railroads to farming, business penmanship, "short methods of commercial calculation," "spelling, punctuation and the proper use of capitals," and lectures on commercial law, political economy and other subjects constituted the chief studies. The practical department provided the student with "college currency"

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 1866, 133-4.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-8.

<sup>30</sup> *Historical Sketches of the Higher Educational Institutions and Also of Benevolent and Reformatory Institutions of the State of Ohio* (n. p., 1876). The State published the volume in the centennial year. It has no page numbers but each institution is given a special section.

and had him engage in all sorts of commercial transactions and keep books on them. Mr. Van Sickle refused to promise situations to his students though he declared that a large proportion of his graduates had obtained permanent and responsible positions. He invited ladies as well as gentlemen to take his course, since "it can not be long before Book-keeping will be generally accepted as a proper sphere of woman's labor."

The war gave a severe set-back to the public school system. Financial problems led to the reduction of local taxes levied for school purposes, and in some districts to their elimination, thus leaving the schools dependent on the State levy. Teachers in many instances were confronted with ten-per cent salary reductions by 1862 in the face of sharp increases in the cost of living.<sup>31</sup> The war also affected the teaching profession by drawing an estimated five thousand teachers into military service in 1861-1862, perhaps one-half of the young men engaged in teaching at the outbreak of war.<sup>32</sup> By 1863 there were 3,890 more female teachers than male, a sharp contrast with 1861 when the men outnumbered the women by 740.<sup>33</sup> The balance was not restored when peace returned. In the long run the results were good. While the immediate loss in experienced teaching was unfortunate, the women replacements were reported by 1865 as better qualified than their male predecessors and better fitted to deal with the younger children. The State commissioner noted that New York and Massachusetts had a far larger percentage of women teachers than Ohio and that the results were quite satisfactory.<sup>34</sup>

The use of women teachers was one solution of the problem of operating expenses. The average salary per month of male teachers in the common schools in 1865 was \$36.25, of women teachers \$21.55; in the high schools it was \$73.31 and \$41.97 respectively.<sup>35</sup> Salaries were only twenty per cent above 1860, though the cost of

<sup>31</sup> State Commissioner of Common Schools, *Annual Report, 1862* (Columbus, 1863), 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 1863, 8-9.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1865, 22-3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

living had soared far above this percentage. Wages and salaries in most lines of business were considerably more than those of teachers, but the ease with which untried and untrained youngsters in their teens could obtain teaching certificates from local examiners kept supply ahead of demand and salaries at a starvation level outside the larger towns. Expenditures for buildings and equipment were kept down during the war and the schools suffered accordingly.

In addition to finances, the war raised other perplexing problems for school officials. For example, the board of examiners of Mahoning County was presented with a request for a teaching certificate from a candidate who "praises the course of Jeff. Davis, and boldly expresses his sympathy with the rebellion." They turned to School Commissioner Anson Smyth for advice. He replied that "good moral character" was a requirement for teaching, that the rebellion was "a crime against society, against law, against God," that one who sympathized with it could not possess good moral character and was unfit to teach. But he warned the examiners not to confuse partisanship and differences of opinion with treason. "And, in my opinion, it would be far better that the vilest traitor be licensed to teach," he concluded, "than that a candidate should be rejected for any reason less than downright treason."<sup>36</sup>

The next commissioner of common schools, Charles W. H. Cathcart, was himself charged with "Copperheadism" and involvement in anti-war plotting. He had been elected in the anti-administration reaction of 1862 but resigned under fire October 19, 1863. Emerson E. White, editor of the *Ohio Educational Monthly* was appointed by Governor Tod to fill out the three-year term. White edited the annual report for 1863.

With the air filled with the alarums of war, the State teachers' association, meeting at Cleveland on June 30, 1862, considered the question of military training in the schools as a leading topic.<sup>37</sup> A report by Eli T. Tappan of Cincinnati favored preliminary military instruction for boys between the ages of twelve and sixteen,

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1862, 131.

<sup>37</sup> *Ohio Educational Monthly*, New Series, IV (1863), 238-40, 254.



consisting of "marchings, facings and company evolutions," and training in the manual of arms for those above sixteen. A special military teacher for each township was suggested. With the Confederate threat of 1862 against Cincinnati fresh in their minds, the teachers proceeded to indorse such a program along with a complementary system of physical training, and also urged that the State maintain a college where military science should be taught.

However, the war fever subsided and State Commissioner White disposed of the matter in a pointed observation in his report for 1865: "It seems to me that, before the State attempts to compel the boys in our schools to go through the manual of arms, it would be wise to compel boys to go to school."<sup>38</sup> His successor, John A. Norris, was more favorable to some form of military training but no action resulted. In a way, the creation of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College (later the Ohio State University) under the Morrill Act was an answer to the problem, for one of the requirements of the act was that military training should be offered.

Despite the retarding effect of war, the period from 1851 to 1873 was one of educational progress in most respects, but one serious problem still baffled educational reformers. Teacher training had made but slight headway. To become a teacher one needed only to have sufficient information to pass an examination conducted by a county board of examiners, if the applicant expected to teach in a township school, or by a special district board, if he expected to teach in a municipality or other special district. Some examiners were so severe in their requirements that half the applicants failed, others so lax that nearly all were passed. The Muskingum County board rejected fifty-five per cent of the applicants for certificates in 1871; in neighboring Knox County but three per cent were turned down.<sup>39</sup>

Examination questions revealed wide differences of opinion as to what the applicant should know.<sup>40</sup> In geography, Clinton County expected him to define "mathematical geography," bound the

<sup>38</sup> *Annual Report*, 1865, 70.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 1871, 34.

<sup>40</sup> Selected from *ibid.*, 217-66.

state of Tennessee, describe the route from Cincinnati to St. Petersburg (Russia) by water, and locate such lakes as Geneva, Wenner, Pepin, Titicaca, and Baikal. Darke County looked for broader information as shown by the following: "Mention the three uses of rivers. Also the causes of the seasons." "Locate each of the zones, and describe the Gulf Stream." "Bound France and Prussia." "Define each of the different kinds of government." Medina County gave nine fairly long questions and then finished with this: "Describe a voyage from New York around the globe, giving the route, naming the principal points of interest, and stating the commercial relations of the United States with the different nations, including the various productions exchanged." Pike County was content to know the principal animals of the torrid zone, the chief vegetable productions of the temperate zone, why the north pole is in darkness half the year, the names of the races of men, and the names of the rivers of Ohio.

But if the State assumed no supervision over local examinations, it made almost no provision for training teachers. A fund created from fees charged applicants for examination for teachers' certificates, on petition of the teachers, could be used in part to pay the expenses of county institutes. The county commissioners might also contribute not to exceed one hundred dollars for this purpose, but this was not usually done. These institutes, lasting from one day to two or three weeks, constituted almost the only training available to most teachers. Sixty-eight were held in the school year, 1870-1871, with 7,158 teachers in attendance. This was less than one-third of the total number in the profession.<sup>41</sup> Yet in 1861 only ten institutes had been held,<sup>42</sup> the nadir of teacher interest in self-improvement.

The crying need for state-supported normal schools to train teachers for their professional duties went unheeded, though advocated by every school commissioner from 1853 to 1873. In 1865 the General Assembly requested the commissioner to report on the

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>42</sup> E. E. White and Thomas W. Harvey, *A History of Education in the State of Ohio* (Columbus, 1876), 321.

problem of normal schools and to suggest a plan, but his report did not result in any legislation.<sup>43</sup> Privately operated normal schools provided opportunities for teacher training, seven being chartered between 1850 and 1875, besides three or four city institutions.<sup>44</sup> The State teachers' association for a time controlled and helped maintain "The McNeely Normal School of Ohio," located at Hopedale, Harrison County.<sup>45</sup> More successful was the privately operated "South-western State Normal School" at Lebanon, which opened in 1855. In 1870 it was renamed "National Normal School." Under the management of Alfred Holbrook it became one of the most successful educational institutions in the State, offering business, engineering, and collegiate courses besides teacher-training work.<sup>46</sup>

But the elevation of teaching into a profession required something more than normal schools and teachers' institutes. Short terms of school and inadequate salaries made teaching a stop-gap to provide funds for young men to continue their education or to go into business or to train for some established profession such as law or the ministry. Nearly one-third of the teachers left the profession each year. Few township district schools had the same teacher two terms in succession. In 1866 only 2,550 of the twenty-one thousand teachers employed during the year taught the same school as the year before.<sup>47</sup> Over one-third of those in township schools were under twenty years of age. Teaching for many years was to be "a temporary calling, engaged in by young men while 'getting under way,' and by young ladies unable to find some other more attractive or more remunerative employment," only to "be abandoned without regret at the first favorable opportunity."<sup>48</sup>

The field of higher education was marked by the almost complete absence of any public support until the creation of the Ohio

<sup>43</sup> *Annual Report, 1865*, 73-89; *1866*, 56.

<sup>44</sup> Bossing, "Educational Legislation," 320.

<sup>45</sup> R. H. Eckelberry, "The McNeely Normal School and Hopedale Normal College," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XL (1931), 86-119.

<sup>46</sup> White and Harvey, *Education in Ohio*, 292-4.

<sup>47</sup> State Commissioner of Common Schools, *Annual Report, 1866*, 23.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 1872, 45.

Agricultural and Mechanical College. An age which regarded with certain misgivings the appearance of tax-supported high schools could hardly be expected to accept the principle of state aid or control of colleges and universities. Save for a nominal connection with Ohio and Miami universities, the State left the field of higher education to the privately supported institutions, generally of a denominational character. The democratic impulse lost momentum here. College education was for the few, not the masses. Even the new agricultural college was the result of a federal land grant with the State a reluctant provider for many years.

Ohio was overblessed with institutions of higher learning by 1851,<sup>49</sup> but the legislature invited the creation of new ones by a general law in 1852 governing such incorporations.<sup>50</sup> It permitted any group of five or more individuals to incorporate as a college or university by proving to the satisfaction of the county auditor that the proposed corporation had property of the value of five hundred dollars. They might then elect a board of trustees, a president and a faculty, and go into the business of granting degrees. Institutions already established could come under the provisions of the act if they chose. No state supervision was required.

Among the new colleges chartered after 1851 were Mt. Union, dating from 1853, though existing earlier as a seminary established by Rev. O. N. Hartshorn at Mt. Union, a village adjacent to Alliance;<sup>51</sup> Antioch, located at Yellow Springs, Greene County, and chartered in 1852 under the auspices of the "Christians"; German Wallace College at Berea, an offshoot of Methodist-sponsored Baldwin University, separated from the parent institution in 1853; and the University of Wooster, established in 1858 as a Presbyterian college. Of these, Antioch won immediate acclaim, for it secured as its president the distinguished Massachusetts educational reformer, Horace Mann. As liberal as Oberlin toward women and

<sup>49</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 177 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Bossing, "Educational Legislation," 224-5.

<sup>51</sup> Sketches of all but Wooster appear in *Historical Sketches of the Higher Educational Institutions of Ohio*. See footnote 30. Briefer sketches are in *Education in Ohio*, Chapter V.



colored students and offering a broad curriculum including electives, Antioch was a success in all respects except the financial one, and the president was not responsible for this. His death in 1859 while the college was undergoing financial reorganization was a serious blow to the young institution, and it struggled for existence in the years of the war. Its eventual recovery was due chiefly to Unitarian aid.

After the war appeared two city-supported universities. By an act of the assembly in 1870 Cincinnati was authorized to establish a university, and to receive funds and to levy taxes for its support.<sup>52</sup> The estate of Charles McMicken had been left to the city in 1857 to provide an endowment for a college. The McMicken School of Design, which existed before the university was created, and the famous Cincinnati Observatory became a part of the new university.

Toledo University grew out of a private institution established in 1872 when 160 acres were given by Mr. and Mrs. Jessup W. Scott for "The Toledo University of Arts and Trades." The legislation for the University of Cincinnati was applied to Toledo University in 1873 giving it municipal status.<sup>53</sup>

In the State's 22 colleges and universities in 1859 were 3,873 students but 2,105 of these were enrolled in the preparatory departments and could hardly be classed as of college rank.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, several of the so-called colleges were scarcely more than high schools or academies in fact. Oberlin, with 181 students (there were also 1026 enrolled in the preparatory department) and 14 instructors, was the largest with Ohio Wesleyan, Miami and Kenyon ranking next in that order. But Oberlin was more than an educational institution. It was a training school for reformers and propagandists who went forth to teach and preach such doctrines as abolitionism, woman's rights, temperance reform, and evangelical Christianity to the unenlightened. The trail of many a reformer led straight back to Oberlin.

<sup>52</sup> Bossing, "Educational Legislation," 256-8.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 260-1.

<sup>54</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1859, 81, 130.

"Manual labor" colleges, combining work and study, and designed to enable the student to support himself, were attempted in two or three instances but with no great success.<sup>55</sup> The movement for agricultural education, discussed elsewhere, made slight headway during the decade of the 1850's but achieved its goal by 1873.

The education of women beyond the common school curriculum was becoming less of a novelty than in the earlier years of the century. Of the principal collegiate institutions of pre-war days, only Oberlin, Antioch and Otterbein admitted women but the presence of female seminaries in college towns, often under the same denominational control as the college, indicated a rather widespread acceptance of the idea of higher education for women. Most of the twenty-two "female colleges" and "seminaries" of 1862 were scarcely more than secondary schools in their courses of study and were injured so much by high school competition that they were employing agents to get students. By 1870 approximately half of the men's colleges had become coeducational and the doom of most of the "female" institutions had been sounded.

The Civil War affected the colleges more directly than it did the secondary schools. Enrollments dropped, financial difficulties resulted, and some had a hard struggle to survive. Oberlin's student numbers dropped from 1,313 in 1861 to 859 in 1863. Not until 1874 was the total back to pre-war levels.<sup>56</sup> Kenyon had lost half of its enrollment by 1864,<sup>57</sup> while Marietta shrank thirty-six per cent.<sup>58</sup> Many students, particularly seniors about to graduate, hastened to enlist and were usually voted their degrees, but college authorities were inclined to discourage their undergraduates from rushing off to war until their services were needed.

One college president did not follow his own advice to his stu-

<sup>55</sup> Zanesville *Courier*, Mar. 21, 1850, carried an advertisement of Central College, Blendon, Franklin County. Albany Manual Labor University, begun in 1848 at Albany, Athens County, had 284 students, 64 in the collegiate department, in 1857. It admitted colored students. Athens *Messenger*, July 10, Oct. 16, 1857.

<sup>56</sup> Tabulated in *Historical Sketches of the Higher Educational Institutions* (1876), in section on Oberlin. Unpaged.

<sup>57</sup> George F. Smythe, *Kenyon College, Its First Century* (New Haven, 1924), 190.

<sup>58</sup> Arthur G. Beach, *A Pioneer College, The Story of Marietta* (privately printed, 1935), 135.

dents and thereby became Ohio's first war hero. Lorin Andrews, president of Kenyon, was acclaimed as the first man in the State to enlist. He had actually written to Governor Dennison offering his services three months before the war began. After the firing on Fort Sumter he organized a company from Knox County and was soon made colonel of the Fourth Ohio Infantry. The hardships of camp life in western Virginia broke down his health and he returned to Gambier to die in September, 1861. As agent for the State teachers' association he had become a leader in educational reform movements while still a young man and in 1853 had been elected president of the association. In his years as president of Kenyon he had shown exceptional ability as an administrator and the college had prospered as never before. He was only forty-two when death ended a career of unusual promise.<sup>59</sup>

The post-war years saw no great advance in higher education in Ohio. Financial problems afflicted most of the twenty or more colleges and universities, to which were added, in some cases, falling enrollment, theological controversies, faculty discord, and other problems. Miami suspended in 1872, Kenyon struggled to avoid a similar fate, while Antioch shifted from the Christian Church's denominational control to a non-sectarian basis but with the funds for its resuscitation chiefly from Unitarian sources.

Twenty-three colleges reported 6,396 students in attendance in 1872-1873 but only 2,767 were in the regular courses, while the total number of graduates was but 382.<sup>60</sup> Oberlin had the largest enrollment with Mt. Union second and Ohio Wesleyan third. Mt. Union offered a varied diet of music, fine arts, business and normal training, besides the usual classical and scientific courses, which seems to explain its large enrollment.

Higher education in Ohio suffered then and later from an oversupply of colleges.<sup>61</sup> Denominational rivalries seemed to require

<sup>59</sup> Smythe, *Kenyon College*, 187-9; Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio in the War* (Columbus, 1893), 25, 995-6.

<sup>60</sup> State Commissioner of Common Schools, *Annual Report*, 1873, 152.

<sup>61</sup> White and Harvey, *Education in Ohio*, 255-62, for a candid contemporary criticism.

that each church have its sectarian brand stamped upon an educational institution as a matter of prestige. Actual instruction to the students was much the same in all of them and their catalogues insisted that students of all faiths were welcome, that sectarian teachings would not be thrust upon them. Occasionally, as at Kenyon just after the war, theological doctrines might create dissensions in the faculty and the board of trustees and weaken the institution but more often the troubles were financial. Unable to attract high grade men by paying decent salaries and providing adequate library and laboratory facilities, some of the colleges seemed satisfied to fill their professorships with ministers of their particular denominations who had failed as preachers or who preferred teaching to the vexations of a parish. There were city high schools that had more exacting standards than many of the colleges. Competition for students lowered entrance requirements and affected scholarship.

Some of the colleges called themselves universities but the title was not deserved. A medical or theological department in addition to the college proper furnished the chief basis for their assumption of the more imposing term. State School Commissioner Thomas W. Harvey declared that the aggregate incomes of all the State's numerous colleges would not support two first-class universities. Many of the colleges, he charged, were unfit to confer degrees. He favored some form of State supervision and deplored the looseness of the laws creating colleges.<sup>62</sup> Commissioner Norris suggested that high schools confer degrees and that a State university be established to make the public school system a symmetrical whole.<sup>63</sup> Few educators saw in the projected State agricultural and mechanical college the germ of a great State university.<sup>64</sup>

The position of the Negro in the educational world was an anomalous one. The Act of 1853 required boards of education to establish colored schools when the whole number of colored chil-

<sup>62</sup> *Annual Report*, 1871, 37; 1872, 27.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 1866, 52.

<sup>64</sup> See Chapter III.



dren in a district exceeded thirty.<sup>65</sup> If the average attendance for one month fell below fifteen, the board was to discontinue the school for not over six months. If there were fewer than fifteen colored children in a district, the money raised by the school levy on this number was to be used for educating them under the direction of the township board. Just how this was to be done was left to that body to decide. As to cases where the number of colored children was between fifteen and thirty the law was strangely silent. It was also silent on the question of their admission to white schools. Under these conditions Negro education made slow progress. Funds were scanty, schools were held in sheds and basements without proper furniture, teachers were poorly qualified and poorly paid, and attendance was very irregular. Of 517 districts containing Negro children in 1859, 416 had no schools at all.<sup>66</sup> In some districts colored pupils were admitted to white schools where local public opinion was favorable, as in Cleveland, but this was not a general practice. In fact, even this advantage was rendered precarious for the great majority in 1859 when the Ohio Supreme Court held that children distinctly colored were not entitled to attend white schools.<sup>67</sup>

In 1863, the number of colored children necessary for a separate school in a township or district was fixed at twenty, with the school board privileged to use the money for their education as it saw fit if the number was under twenty or the distance too great to permit their attendance at one school.<sup>68</sup> The revision was no better than the old law. The money was usually insufficient to do more than provide a few weeks of schooling and boards often ignored the requirements entirely. The State school commissioner cited the case of a wealthy colored taxpayer whose two children, the only colored ones in the township, were refused admission to white schools and received no benefit whatever from the school funds.<sup>69</sup> Each com-

<sup>65</sup> Ohio Laws, *Acts*, 50 Assemb., 2 Sess., LI (1853), 429-53.

<sup>66</sup> State Commissioner of Common Schools, *Annual Report*, 1859, 53-9.

<sup>67</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Dec. 24, 1859.

<sup>68</sup> State Commissioner of Common Schools, *Annual Report*, 1863, 91.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 1865, 48.

missioner commented on the injustice of the system and recommended the imposition of penalties on boards derelict in their duties but the recommendations were ignored by the assembly. In general, colored children were compelled to get along with the crumbs from the table of the controlling race.

In the field of higher education colored students had all too few opportunities. Oberlin, of course, had never discriminated against them, and Antioch, Otterbein and the little Albany Manual Labor University in Athens County were also co-racial. But these were exceptions. The need for a Negro institution of higher learning led to the establishment of Wilberforce University in 1856 at Xenia, Greene County, under the auspices of the Cincinnati Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. For a few years the students numbered between seventy and one hundred. In 1863 it was taken over by the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Enrollment had fallen off until the "college" consisted of six pupils in primary English studies and the faculty was one man. Fire destroyed the principal building in 1865 and the university for a time was practically non-existent. Not until 1870 did it have any graduates.<sup>70</sup> Though it had normal, classical, theological and scientific departments, most of its students were in the preparatory stages of their education. The Freedmen's Bureau, the American Unitarian Association, Gerritt Smith, Salmon P. Chase and others contributed generously to keep the institution in operation, while neighboring Antioch professors delivered lectures on various subjects. Thus slowly was a beginning made with the problem of educating the most downtrodden group in Ohio's population.

The lyceum, or literary society, with its course of lectures, constituted another educational force. The mid-century decades were indeed the golden age of the lecture platform. With educational facilities beyond the common schools limited for the masses, travel still a novelty to the average man, and libraries available for only a small part of the population, the lyceum provided an intellectual

<sup>70</sup> Historical sketch in *Historical Sketches of Higher Educational Institutions of Ohio* (unpagged).

stimulus and a cultural contact not otherwise possible. But it was more than that. For those who regarded the theater as not quite respectable and for those others who, living outside the larger cities, had few opportunities to attend plays and concerts, lectures were a form of entertainment and a diversion to break the monotony of the long winters. Few towns were so poor that they could not provide such entertainment in some form. If Ralph Waldo Emerson or Henry Ward Beecher or Bayard Taylor were only for the cultured audiences of the larger cities, the local minister or school teacher was usually available for the rural communities for the asking. Woman's rights, abolition, temperance and diet enthusiasts found the lecture platform admirably suited for their propaganda and often peddled their ideas through the more isolated sections gratis. Phrenologists, astrologists, hypnotists and others of this stripe were less altruistic though their "courses" usually began with a free lecture to arouse the interest of the populace in their wares. These, of course, were not included in the regular lyceum courses.

This thirst for culture by lecture audiences reveals the characteristic western eagerness for the better things of life. But this consciousness of a need for culture emphasized western inferiority to the East and created a trans-Allegheny market for eastern lectures. The more popular platform "stars" from the seaboard states capitalized upon this market to the extent of charging as much as \$100 to \$125 for each appearance.<sup>71</sup> Critics were not lacking who complained of such prices and who even questioned the quality of the intellectual feasts provided on such occasions. The advocates of western cultural independence bespoke the use of native talent at comparatively modest prices and pointed to the availability of such men as Horace Mann, Cassius M. Clay, Samuel Galloway, Coates Kinney and others. Horace Mann, in particular, was a stellar attraction wherever he appeared, but the lyceums of the larger cities depended mainly upon the drawing power of imported talent with local celebrities judiciously used to fill in gaps on the

<sup>71</sup> *Genius of the West* (Columbus), IV (1855), 281, 313-4, 340-2.

courses and lessen the expense. In 1860, Cincinnatians heard such well-known persons as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Lola Montez, Henry J. Raymond, Carl Schurz, John Mitchell and Thomas Ewing. Zanesville listened to Emerson, George D. Prentice, Grace Greenwood, Bayard Taylor, Henry Ward Beecher and ex-Governor Chase in this same year. Some of the smaller places organized circuits which would insure the lecturer a series of appointments on successive nights with a minimum of travel and, for the lyceums, a lower charge per lecture.

The lyceums also provided libraries for their members, a valuable adjunct to their lecture courses. Foremost among these was the Young Men's Mercantile Library Association of Cincinnati, whose intellectual activities and influence were not surpassed by any similar organization in the entire West.<sup>72</sup> Cleveland, Columbus, Zanesville and many other cities also had such associations, all in a more or less flourishing condition.<sup>73</sup> Some were evidently losing their literary interests and becoming centers for social, political and theological controversies, furthered by the clash of opinions from the lecture platform. In any case, the West was receiving a baptism of culture from the intellectual missionaries of the East. The fact that new ideas occasionally aroused resentment is proof of their stimulating effect.

The quarter century after 1850 saw Ohio journalism enter upon a great period of prosperity and influence. Railroad and telegraph greatly improved news service, and the former made for greater speed and cheapness in delivering papers. Mechanical improvements lowered printing costs, while advertising brought increased revenues. Party support lost much of its significance and a greater independence in editorial view point became evident. Local news received greater attention and even the smaller papers were no longer largely reprints of news and editorials from metropolitan journals. While the functions of editor and printer were still com-

<sup>72</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Apr. 19, 1860.

<sup>73</sup> Contemporary newspapers.



bined in the small town weeklies, the dailies of the cities were evolving into corporations and the editor was no longer the sole owner. At Cincinnati and Cleveland he was usually a partner in the enterprise, often the dominant one, but another generation was to see him reduced to the status of a salaried employee.

All this was part and parcel of the spread of industry and business in the Buckeye State. As cities grew, so did their newspapers in circulation, advertising and profits. Politics in the sense of narrow partisanship meant less; the ties of journalism with business meant more. "It is indispensably necessary that advertising—the only part of the daily newspaper which is profitable to its owners—should have place first of all," said the Cincinnati *Commercial*,<sup>74</sup> which boasted that its circulation was the largest in the West. Next in importance it placed news of the day, personal and literary gossip and pleasant reading, and finally editorial comments and correspondence from its readers. Yet the advertising, though voluminous, made little appeal to the eye. Much of it was in small print in the form of classified advertising, while that in larger type, usually patent medicines, was repetitious, hackneyed and dull in form, though extravagant in its claims. For example, "Helmbold's Buchu" modestly claimed to cure all diseases of the sexual organs, male or female, whatever the cause and no matter how long standing for one dollar a bottle.<sup>75</sup> Such examples could be multiplied.

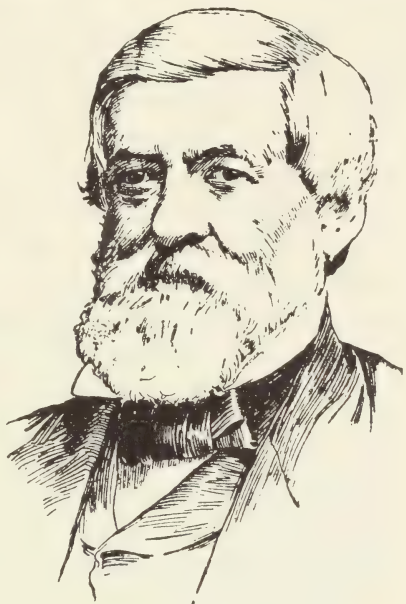
Yet this was the era of Ohio's great editors. The editor's personality and viewpoint gave tone to the newspaper's columns and stamped it with his individuality. Such men as Samuel Medary, Oran Follett, James J. Faran, Richard Smith, Charles F. Browne, Samuel S. Cox, Joseph Medill, W. C. and William Dean Howells, Joseph W. Gray, David Ross Locke (Petroleum V. Nasby), William D. Bickham, James M. Comly, Murat Halstead, Edwin Cowles, Washington McLean, Josiah A. Harris, Otway Curry, John C. Vaughan, Henry and Samuel R. Reed, Whitelaw Reid and a host of others are proof of the high place of the press in the cultural as

<sup>74</sup> Mar. 16, 1860.

<sup>75</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Jan., 1860.

well as the material life of the State.<sup>76</sup> Not all won fame as newspaper men. William Dean Howells, though reared in a printing office, was a budding poet whose financial circumstances forced him into journalism. Eventually it was literature that established his fame, for a certain diffidence, or lack of self-confidence, hampered his newspaper career. Charles F. Browne (Artemus Ward) established his reputation as a humorist while on the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* but presently found the lecture platform more inviting and much more lucrative. Samuel S. ("Sunset") Cox edited the *Ohio Statesman* from April 1, 1853, to May 23, 1854, retiring poorer in purse but with an imperishable nickname and a reputation for fine writing based upon a flamboyant editorial description of the beauties of a sunset.<sup>77</sup> He found politics a more satisfactory career and as a member of Congress achieved a national reputation. Journalism could hardly have done as much for him.

Of those whose reputations rest upon their newspaper careers, the name of Samuel Medary undoubtedly should rank near the top. Editing the *Ohio Statesman* almost continuously from the close of Jackson's presidency to 1853 and again from 1855 to 1857, he seemed at times almost the dictator of the Democratic party in the State. For years most of the party organs at the various county seats looked



9. SAMUEL MEDARY

<sup>76</sup> The comments on Ohio journalism in this chapter are based upon an examination of files of most of the papers mentioned. Facts about Ohio newspapers may be found in Osman C. Hooper, *History of Ohio Journalism, 1793-1933* (Columbus, 1933). Archer H. Shaw, *The Plain Dealer* (New York, 1942) contains much information about Cleveland newspapers.

<sup>77</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, May 19, 1853.

to the *Statesman* for guidance on public questions. No Ohio Democrat, except William Allen, was so well known throughout the country in the pre-war generation. But Medary's free use of personalities and his skill at invective aroused enmities in his own party and weakened his influence in the 1850's. The hostility of the Allen faction cost the veteran editor a seat in President Pierce's cabinet and contributed to his failure to win a United States senatorship in 1854.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, no Ohioan was so favored by President Buchanan, Medary successively holding the governorship of Minnesota Territory, the Columbus postmastership and the governorship of Kansas Territory. To him, more than to any other individual, was due the movement for a new constitution, and his influence was a potent factor in securing Democratic control of the convention of 1850-1851 and the acceptance of the completed instrument by the voters. He was also actively interested in agricultural improvement and served as a member of the State Board of Agriculture for several years. But his merits have been largely lost sight of because of his violent partisanship and because of his bitter hostility to the Civil War, expressed through the columns of his war-time paper, the *Crisis*. Even to the present day his name has remained under a cloud and his real contributions to Ohio history unjustly obscured by the smoke of sectional conflict.

While no one in the Whig or Republican ranks wielded an authority like that of the Democratic veteran, one editor did contribute much to Republican success in the critical years of 1854-1855 when the new party came into existence. Oran Follett, taking over the *Ohio State Journal* at the time of the Nebraska struggle in Congress, transformed that bankrupt Whig organ into the leading Republican daily and, through its columns as well as by his skill as a politician, did more than any other man to harmonize the discordant elements in the Anti-Nebraska movement and save the new organization from both Know-Nothingism and abolitionism. His retirement in 1856 was followed by a decline in the *State Journal's* influence and by 1858 it was again in dire financial straits. Then

<sup>78</sup> See chapters on political history.

Henry D. Cooke came from the *Sandusky Register* to restore its failing fortunes and under him it became not merely a party vehicle but a well edited modern newspaper. This was due chiefly to two brilliant young editors to whom Cooke largely left the conduct of his paper. Samuel R. Reed and William Dean Howells provided the sober old *State Journal* with a light, ironical and at times facetious tone, and a humor and sprightliness that made it perhaps the most readable paper in the State. By 1861 it had lost their services, for other work proved more attractive.

In the post-war years the leading figure among capital city journalists was General James M. Comly, a vigorous writer and an influential figure in Republican politics, who gave the *Ohio State Journal* as liberal a viewpoint for a party organ as it has ever enjoyed.<sup>79</sup> A companion at arms of Rutherford B. Hayes, he did much to advance the political fortunes of Ohio's governor. Under Comly the *Journal* prospered financially as it had not under most of his predecessors.

The Cincinnati *Commercial* was published in the 1850's by M. D. Potter and Company but Murat Halstead was becoming the outstanding figure on its staff. In the post-war years he dominated the paper and made himself a place in the front rank of American journalists. Arrogant, sharp-tongued, a prodigious worker, Halstead lashed with scorpions those who opposed him or criticised his editorial viewpoint. The *Commercial* was an independent Republican journal, so independent that it favored letting the territories settle the slavery question for themselves in 1860, opposed protective tariff in the post-war years, and for a time supported the anti-Grant Liberal Republican movement in 1871-1872.

The Cincinnati *Enquirer* was the leading Democratic organ of the Ohio Valley and had no party rival at Cincinnati. Two men directed its destinies in the war era, James J. Faran and Washington McLean, both important political figures. Faran was editor-in-chief and in active control; McLean, with his large business inter-

<sup>79</sup> Eugene H. Kleinpell, James M. Comly, Journalist-Politician (Ph. D. Thesis MS. Ohio State University, 1936).



ests and his political activities, was the power behind the editorial policy. The venerable *Cincinnati Gazette*, after some changes of stock ownership in the 1850's, had Richard ("Deacon") Smith at the helm during the war and for many years afterward. Its Republicanism, like the Whiggery of its younger days, was at first conservative and orthodox, but the Civil War made it a radical organ. Its course, however, paid dividends. "We divided fifty thousand in July, and have fifty thousand more to divide this month. . . . We don't owe a dollar, and the *Gazette* is now pretty good property."<sup>80</sup> So wrote Smith in January, 1866. Whitelaw Reid, who had come out of Xenia to work for the *Gazette*, won his spurs as its correspondent, first at Columbus and then, during the war, at Washington. Later he went to the New York *Tribune* and succeeded Horace Greeley as editor at the latter's death. The *Cincinnati Times*, under Calvin W. Starbuck, had little competition in the afternoon field before 1868 and prospered accordingly. It supported the anti-Catholic, anti-foreign doctrines of the Know-Nothings in the 1850's but ultimately arrived in the Republican camp.

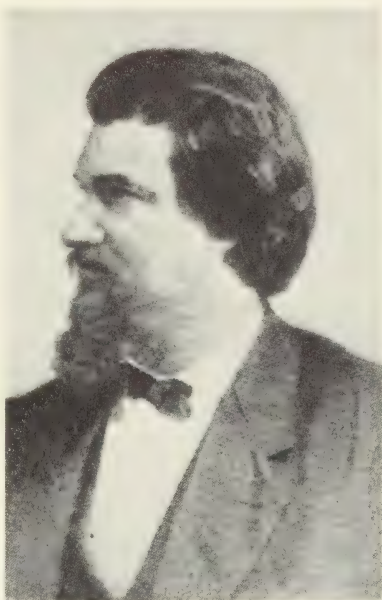
In Cleveland three well established papers existed by 1860 to assert the importance of the most rapidly growing city in the State. The *Plain Dealer*, owned and edited by Joseph W. Gray for many years until his death in 1862, fought a losing battle for the Democratic party against the growth of Republicanism in the Western Reserve. It opposed proslavery tendencies in its own party, though its position cost its editor the Cleveland postmastership in the Buchanan administration, for Gray was an old friend of Douglas. It must not be forgotten that in the columns of the *Plain Dealer* "Artemus Ward" (Charles F. Browne) won national recognition. The *Herald* and the *Leader* voiced the views of the moderate and radical Republicans respectively. The former, long edited by Josiah A. Harris, was an old Whig organ, which aided in forming the Republican party and became its chief organ in northern Ohio. The latter was the product of a union in 1853 of the Free Soil organ,

<sup>80</sup> Smith to Joseph H. Barrett, Jan. 14, 1866, Muriel Bernitt Drell, ed., "Letters by Richard Smith of the *Cincinnati Gazette*," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (Cedar Rapids), XXVI (1940), 553.

the *True Democrat*, and an antislavery Whig paper of short life, the *Forest City*. Joseph Medill edited the *Leader* for a while but he did not in his Ohio career achieve anything like the position and importance that came to him after 1855 when he went to the *Chicago Tribune*. The story that he founded the Republican party in the *Leader* office is without foundation. Edwin Cowles, who took control of the *Leader* after Medill, preserved the radical tone of the paper and ultimately out-distanced the older *Herald*.

In northwestern Ohio the Toledo *Blade* was the best known journal. Whig and later Republican in politics, it was part of the time without a serious Democratic rival, as an evil fortune seemed to pursue the various Democratic organs of that city. Clark Waggoner published the *Blade*, 1856-1865, when David R. Locke began his long connection with it, first as editor, later as publisher.

Among antislavery radicals in the pre-war years no paper was more highly regarded than the Jefferson *Ashtabula Sentinel*, "the voice of Giddings." Giddings himself guided its destinies for a time but later turned it over to William Cooper Howells, father of the novelist. It continued, however, to be regarded as the mouth-piece of the veteran antislavery leader until his death in 1864, for he often contributed to its columns. In the conservative Scioto Valley the Chillicothe *Gazette*, oldest of Ohio's newspapers, though changing editors several times, served as an antidote in both the Whig and Republican parties to antislavery radicalism. The *Advertiser* in the same city voiced the views of the Scioto Democracy and was



10. DAVID R. LOCKE

reputed to be the mouthpiece of former Senator William Allen, leader of the anti-Medary element, and consequently often at odds with the *Ohio Statesman* at Columbus.

At Canton the dean of Ohio editors, John Saxton, ended his long connection with the *Canton Ohio Repository* with his death in 1871.<sup>81</sup> He had founded it as a Federalist journal in 1815 when Madison was president and had lived to help elect Grant. Of opposite politics was the *Stark County Democrat*, long controlled by Archibald McGregor, whose "Copperhead" utterances during the Civil War aroused a Union mob to attack his plant and brought about the arrest and confinement of the editor in a military prison for a short time.

Dayton journalism was represented by two strong partisan organs, the *Republican Journal* and the *Democratic Empire*.<sup>82</sup> The former, long owned by R. N. and W. F. Comly, was the object of a mob attack in 1863 and its plant was destroyed. It was reestablished by public subscription and Major William D. Bickham, war correspondent for the *Cincinnati Commercial*, was asked to take charge. For thirty-one years he conducted the *Dayton Journal*, making it one of the most influential party papers. The *Empire* was edited by Clement L. Vallandigham from 1847 to 1855 and continued for many years to express his political viewpoint. One editor was shot and killed in November, 1862, the paper itself was temporarily suspended by military order in 1863 because of its attitude at the time of Vallandigham's arrest, and a mob of Union soldiers demolished its office in 1864. The *Empire* became the *Daily Ledger* in 1867 with Vallandigham again one of its publishers. It was an ancestor of the *Dayton News*. Many other examples could be given of influential and prosperous newspapers in the smaller cities and towns but these will suffice as illustrations of the power and importance of the press.

One other phase of journalistic progress deserves mention. The German-language press had become a vital factor in the social and

<sup>81</sup> Hooper, *Ohio Journalism*, 44-6.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-5.

political life of the Germans and contributed much toward the advancement of education, antislavery and other reform movements of a liberal character. There were twenty-two German papers in the State in 1860, of which eight were Republican in politics, the others of the Douglas Democratic stamp.<sup>83</sup> Some were scarcely more than German editions of the local party organs but others had an independence and spirit of their own. This was especially evident at Cincinnati, where radicals and reformers from the Fatherland found a congenial atmosphere. The *Volksblatt*, the *Volksfreund* and the *Republikaner* were German dailies. Such editors as Stephen Molitor and Friedrich Hassaurek were a power in combating nativism and slavery and in depriving the Democratic party of a large part of its German support. Around 1860 a German refugee editor, August Willich of the *Republikaner*, had become an ardent champion of the young labor and communist movement in Cincinnati. Later he won a brigadier-general's commission in the Civil War.

The contribution of the three learned professions to Ohio's intellectual life in the 1850's was both positive and negative in character. Law occupied a particularly high plane; the ministry and medicine were much lower. While legal education was chiefly a matter of two years of study in a lawyer's office or presentation of a certificate from the Cincinnati Law College and a license to practice from a court,<sup>84</sup> it produced a singularly able body of attorneys. The high prestige of the legal profession, its usefulness as a road to political eminence, the glamor of legal battles in an age that prized forensic eloquence, and the drabness of commercial pursuits before the era of "big business" perhaps explain the drawing power of the law to active and alert minds. The "bright boy" in almost every family was regarded as the logical choice for the legal profession.

The mere mention of a few leaders of the bar reveals its high plane. Among the practicing attorneys Thomas Ewing probably

<sup>83</sup> A compilation of the *Ohio State Journal*, quoted in *Cincinnati Commercial*, July 25, 1860.

<sup>84</sup> Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier*, 181; Edward A. Miller, "The History of Educational Legislation in Ohio from 1803 to 1850," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XXVII (1918), 116.



held the highest place before the war in a notable group composed of such men as Henry Stanbery, Samuel F. Vinton, Stanley Matthews, Noah H. Swayne, William S. Groesbeck, Hugh J. Jewett, and others equally able.<sup>85</sup> Among lawyers who had been or were giving more attention to politics than to law were Salmon P. Chase, Joshua R. Giddings, Benjamin F. Wade, Thomas Corwin, John A. Bingham, William Dennison, John Sherman, George E. Pugh, William Allen, Reuben Wood, Clement L. Vallandigham, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Jacob D. Cox and many others. It is significant of the close relationship of law and politics that nearly all of the first group were also at times active in politics.

Among the State supreme judges were some notable figures. Perhaps the greatest authority on Ohio law was Judge Joseph R. Swan, whose legal writings and editions of the statutes were familiar to every lawyer in the State, and whose fugitive slave law decision of 1859, which cost him his place on the bench, attracted nation-wide attention. Other able judges included Rufus P. Ranney, whose practice after his retirement from the bench rivalled Ewing's; Allen G. Thurman, who did not become very active in politics until 1867; Peter Hitchcock, whose service on the supreme bench of twenty-eight years came to an end in 1852; and William White, who came to the court in 1864 to serve nineteen years.

In federal judicial service were Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase of the United States Supreme Court, appointed in 1864; Associate Justice John McLean, who died in 1861 after serving thirty-two years on the Nation's highest court; and Associate Justice Noah H. Swayne, who was appointed by President Lincoln in 1862. Future justices then practicing law in Ohio were Morrison R. Waite of Toledo, Stanley Matthews of Cincinnati and William B. Woods of Licking County. Two future presidents of the United States also made law the starting point for their political careers—Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinley. A third was admitted to the bar in 1853 after studying law at Cincinnati but removed to Indiana to

<sup>85</sup> For biographies of lawyers and judges, see Carrington T. Marshall, *A History of the Courts and Lawyers of Ohio* (4 vols., New York, 1934).

practice. This was Benjamin Harrison. A fourth, James A. Garfield, turned to law after several years as teacher and college president.

The medical profession presents a sharp contrast. Save for Dr. Daniel Drake who died in 1852 and whose significant contributions belong rather to an earlier generation, scarcely an Ohio physician or surgeon had a reputation beyond his own State. Indeed, the modern science of medicine was just emerging in the United States, and a state as new as Ohio would hardly be found in the van of scientific progress. To practice medicine outside the larger centers involved hardships of travel that would deter from the profession those not possessed of a hardy spirit, but an even more significant factor in diverting men of intelligence from medicine was the absence of any State regulation of its practice. A degree from a medical college or study and training under a physician or surgeon were customary, but there was nothing to prevent any unscrupulous incompetent from calling himself a doctor. An act of 1868 requiring two full courses of instruction and graduation from a medical college, except in the case of physicians who had practiced for ten years, proved ineffective.<sup>86</sup> Since at least ten medical institutions existed in Ohio at the close of the 1850's, more or less in competition with one another for students, it was not difficult to obtain a degree after attending a few courses of lectures. Of all the students in professional schools—law, theology, commerce, and medicine—over half were enrolled in medicine.<sup>87</sup> Cincinnati had five or six medical schools of one kind or another all through this period.<sup>88</sup> While the rural districts were in need of physicians, the towns and cities suffered from an evil almost as great, for a large percentage of their numerous practitioners were imposters or quacks.

This laissez-faire principle in the field of medicine was its curse. It permitted incompetence and quackery to flourish without interference from the State while the honest physician often went un-

<sup>86</sup> Ohio Laws, *Acts*, 58 Assemb., 1 Sess., LXV (1868), 146-7.

<sup>87</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1859, 82.

<sup>88</sup> Charles Cist, *Cincinnati in 1859* (Cincinnati, 1859), 182-91; D. J. Kenny, *Illustrated Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, 1875), 81-6.

rewarded for his efforts. The *Ohio Medical and Surgical Journal* declared that a law requiring an examination before admittance to the practice of medicine would "elevate us to the level of the demi-civilized in other portions of the globe."<sup>89</sup> Whereas, in the open forum of the law, this absence of regulation seemed to bring the keenest and cleverest to the front by a process of eliminating the unfit, in the field of medicine there was no such check. Personable quacks were more likely to gain reputation and fortune than were honest, conscientious physicians who refused to profess omniscience.

The claims and contentions of such rival schools of medical practice as the regular or allopathic, the homeopathic, the eclectic, the physiomedical, and the botanic,<sup>90</sup> may well have bewildered the average man and contributed to a distrust of all medical practitioners. Advocates of such cults as hydropathy (water as a curative), vegetarianism, hypnotism and the like, who had glimpsed a bit of the eternal truth and made it into a system, were ready to entrap the unwary. Patent medicines and family medical books invited the sick to cure themselves, thus adding to the confusion of tongues.

Newspaper advertisements reveal the low state of medicine in these years. "Specialists" set forth their claims in large type, one in sexual diseases at Cincinnati in 1860, "from the hospitals of London, Paris, and Baltimore," proclaiming his power to cure gonorrhoea in three days and syphilis in five, while another Cincinnati practitioner claimed to know how to rid the human system of "coughs, throat diseases, bronchitis, catarrh and consumption."<sup>91</sup> Their rural co-workers were no less skilled, if their advertisements may be believed, for in the little village of South Perry, in the hills of Hocking County, lived two medical partners who vouched "to extirpate the most difficult cases of Cancer in the short space of from thirty minutes to seven hours—almost in every case without the use of the knife."<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup> XI (Columbus, 1858), 161.

<sup>90</sup> Frederick C. Waite, "Thompsonianism in Ohio," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XLIX (1940), 322-31.

<sup>91</sup> From advertisements in the *Cincinnati Commercial*, Jan. 3, 1860.

<sup>92</sup> *Athens Messenger*, Dec. 10, 1858.

But even more obstructive to the progress of medicine was the gullibility of the general public toward patent medicines. Their widespread use is evidenced by the space they occupy in the newspapers. A resolution against patent medicines was voted down at a State editors' convention as the business was too profitable.<sup>93</sup> The columns of the little country weeklies as well as the large city dailies proclaimed to their readers the virtues of the same medicines. Scrofula, syphilis, bronchitis, ulcers, tumors, consumption, rickets, asthma, St. Vitus dance, and erysipelas constitute only a partial list of the diseases to be cured by "Radway's Renovating Resolvent," whose manufacturer, in addition, produced two other remedies, "Radway's Ready Relief" and "Radway's Regulators," designed apparently to cover the remaining ills to which the human flesh might be heir.<sup>94</sup> "Brant's Indian Purifying Extract" was proclaimed as efficacious for "The Worst Scrofulas, all impure diseases of the blood, viz: Scald-Head, Salt-Rheum, Rheumatism, Eruptions, Pimples on the Face, Piles, Biles, Ulcers, Costiveness, Mercurial Diseases, Liver Complaint, Pains in the Back, Side, and Limbs, Rush of Blood to the Head, etc., etc."<sup>95</sup>

The frankness of advertisements with regard to sexual matters is surprising in an age of prudery in most matters. Preparations supposed to produce abortions were offered to the public with only the flimsiest attempt at concealment. The Cincinnati *Lancet and Observer*, a medical periodical, criticised the newspapers for admitting such advertisements and deplored the fact that a large portion of the community was becoming "fearfully indifferent and loose in their views of this subject."<sup>96</sup> Most of these patent medicines were made in the East. As one Ohio physician put it, "The West is the prolific field for the sale of these nostrums, and the Indian nostrums are invariably discovered in New York or Philadelphia."<sup>97</sup>

While the practice of medicine seems, on the whole, to have been

<sup>93</sup> *Ohio Medical and Surgical Journal*, IX (1856), 72-3.

<sup>94</sup> *Athens Messenger*, Dec. 16, 1853.

<sup>95</sup> *Cleveland Herald*, Jan. 1, 1850.

<sup>96</sup> *I* (1858), 46.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, IV (1861), 590.



in a backward state in Ohio, there are signs that it was improving and that progress, even if slow, was not impossible. The Ohio State Medical Society was incorporated in 1848 to further interest in medicine and its annual conventions, at which papers of a scientific character were read, brought about the cooperation of the best elements in the profession. Many local societies were also being organized.<sup>98</sup> The pages of such medical journals as the *Western Lancet* of Cincinnati and the *Ohio Medical and Surgical Journal* of Columbus served as a clearing house for information on new developments and experiments and unusual cases and reveal a lively interest on the part of many practitioners in the progress of medical science.<sup>99</sup> Quackery was denounced and occasionally one hears of the law intervening to punish malpractice.

The appalling ignorance of the masses of people as to the simple facts of physiology was being slowly overcome by the progress of education while the lecture platform helped to popularize knowledge of the human body. Women who had been kept in ignorance of anatomy and physiology by prudery and false modesty turned out to hear lecturers of their own sex enlighten them, even to the point of demonstrating the fundamentals of anatomy with an artificial body, which could be taken apart and reassembled in view of the audience. Believers in women's rights even formed an association to encourage women to enter the medical profession, though the net results seem to have been slight.<sup>100</sup> Advocates of fresh air, frequent baths, outdoor exercise and care in diet were criticising the widespread use of medicines and drugs and urging adherence to a few simple rules of health as the best preventive of disease.<sup>101</sup>

With all these indications of progress one is forced to conclude, nevertheless, that the modern science of medicine was just beginning to make headway in Ohio. Proper medical education and

<sup>98</sup> Robert G. Patterson, "The Role of the District as a Unit in Organized Medicine in Ohio," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XLIX (1940), 367-77.

<sup>99</sup> Jonathan Forman, "The Medical Journals of the Period, 1835-1858," *ibid.*, 361-6.

<sup>100</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, IX (Jan. 1, 1853), 12-3; XI (Mar. 1, 1855), 76.

<sup>101</sup> Many articles in the *Ohio Cultivator*, 1851-1861; *Cincinnati Commercial*, Oct. 30, Nov. 1, 7, 1860; *The Genius of the West*, IV (1855), 321-5.

adequate State regulation were still far in the future. The best practitioners were as alive to the new discoveries in their field as their eastern contemporaries, but they were a minority. It is to be feared that the great majority were doing little to elevate the standards of their profession, and some unfortunately were doing much to lower them. For these conditions, however, the general public must be blamed as well as the physicians. Both needed to be educated to insure real and lasting progress.

Dentistry, though still in tutelage to medicine, was slowly evolving into a profession. The Ohio College of Dental Surgery, chartered in 1845, continued to function successfully at Cincinnati, offering two terms of work by the early 1870's for \$130 plus some special fees.<sup>102</sup> Its building was said to be the first one ever erected solely for dental education.<sup>103</sup> James Taylor, its founder, was the first editor of the *Dental Register of the West*, the second dental journal in the world.<sup>104</sup> It was founded in 1847 and lasted until 1923. Beginning with the Cincinnati association in 1844, dentists organized local and district associations in the 1850's, capped in 1866 by the formation of the Ohio Dental Society.<sup>105</sup>

The ministry, most respected of the three learned professions, seemed as backward as medicine in its intellectual contribution. Indeed, the minister was not usually regarded as an intellectual leader but rather as a spiritual and moral guide. Intensity of conviction, earnestness, faith, oratorical persuasiveness, moral strength—such qualities as these were more essential to great religious leaders than educational training and intellectual power. Indeed, the boast of old Peter Cartwright, best known itinerant Methodist preacher in the West, was that, of the thousands of traveling and local preachers of his denomination, there were not fifty who had anything more than a common English education, scores who had

<sup>102</sup> Kenny, *Illustrated Cincinnati*, 85-6.

<sup>103</sup> Cist, *Cincinnati in 1859*, 190-1.

<sup>104</sup> Edward C. Mills, "Dentistry and Dental Education," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XLIX (1940), 395.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 396-7.

not even that, and not one who had been trained in a theological school.<sup>106</sup>

However, the transition to an educated ministry was clearly under way. The presence of eleven theological seminaries (eight of them Protestant) with 209 students in 1859 betokened well for the future.<sup>107</sup> On the lecture courses of the lyceums, especially in the smaller places, the local minister often played an important part. College presidents were usually ministers and professors often so. Among the school teachers and educational leaders one finds a sprinkling of former ministers, more often of the Presbyterian faith. The State school commissioner from 1857 to 1863 was a Presbyterian minister, Reverend Anson Smyth. Also of that denomination was Reverend Asa D. Lord, editor of educational periodicals and perhaps the most influential leader in bringing about reforms in the State's school system.

Neither can the part played by the Protestant ministry in the field of moral reforms, particularly temperance, be overlooked. From pulpits all over the State rang out incessant denunciations of the liquor traffic, while confined more nearly to the northern counties were the equally fiery attacks of the "political parsons" directed against the evil of African slavery. The power of the Protestant churches in politics was of considerable importance to the Republican party's successes in the 1850's. The flaring up of nativism, 1854-1856, was due in no small measure to the fanaticism of a part of the Protestant ministry. During the Civil War they were generally loyal to the Union and preached and prayed for its preservation.

But these causes required emotional appeal in their advocates rather than intellectual power. The preacher who could sway his flock to a religious frenzy might sway them equally to sustain a cause that seemed of great moral worth. Evangelistic fervor might assume many forms. The ideal of the Protestant preacher was Henry Ward Beecher, master of eloquence, and not Emerson and Theo-

<sup>106</sup> *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright* (New York, 1856), 408.

<sup>107</sup> Commissioner of Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1859, 82.

dore Parker, masters of intellect. The democracy of the frontier had demanded a simple, emotional religion that required ministers who could exhort. Ohio was still very much under this influence. The minister tended naturally to reflect the viewpoint of the congregation rather than to run counter to it by striving to reach the stars. As a consequence the pulpit did not contribute greatly to Ohio's intellectual progress in these years.

The interdenominational jealousies in many communities, the narrow theology of so many ministers, the excessive attention to creed and doctrine, all reveal an intolerant spirit that was hostile to intellectual progress. Only those ministers who made education rather than religion their primary interest did much to foster the development of a true cultural life. Yet the fault lay only in part with the pulpit. The low salaries of so many of the ministers and their poverty-stricken condition were not conducive to intellectual progress or even the maintenance of self-respect.<sup>108</sup> With no funds for books or travel, intellects were pinched and narrow theology made narrower. Such an environment was hostile to learning.

The Methodist editor of the *Ladies' Repository*, which was both a literary and religious periodical, expressed his pleasure over the thin attendance at one of Emerson's lectures and attacked Theodore Parker, the noted Boston Unitarian divine, for stating that man had been making progress on the earth for sixty thousand years. "With one mighty sweep of his wand, history, science, revelation, all are swept away," said the editor.<sup>109</sup> At Parker's death the *Repository* carried an article by Thrace Talmon, "Theodore Parker and Infidelity."<sup>110</sup>

Among the Cincinnati Germans there were many free thinkers, although the great majority were members of Protestant or Roman Catholic churches. The clash of views is illustrated by this item in the *Cincinnati Gazette*: "Hassaurek, the free thinker, and Rev. Mr. Wittenberg, a Methodist minister, have, for eight nights, been discussing the question of the Morality or Rationality of Christianity.

<sup>108</sup> *Ladies' Repository* XVII (1857), 636-8.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII (1853), 185.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, XX (1860), 550-3.



Both are Germans, and a crowded house of Germans are present every night.”<sup>111</sup> In such an atmosphere religion could not stagnate.

In 1872 the Cincinnati *Commercial* printed the sermon of a Jewish rabbi delivered in a Universalist pulpit.<sup>112</sup> Such an item must have shocked the narrow sectarians but it proved that liberalism had its supporters in the theological profession.

To assess religious progress, apart from the cultural contributions and reforming activities of the churches, is no easy task. Churches and communicants multiplied, and each denomination could boast of its increase in wealth and membership, but whether the things of the spirit meant as much as they had earlier is to be doubted. The zeal and spiritual leadership of the Alexander Campbells and Peter Cartwrights of the preceding period were not paralleled in the Civil War generation. Conditions, however, had changed radically. In the formative period the Buckeye State was an inviting field for religious work. Its cosmopolitan population, drawn from many denominations of the seaboard or from the older churchless frontier to the east and south, invited the best efforts of the earnest savers of souls to win recruits for their particular beliefs. A stout heart, the faith to move mountains and a caustic tongue were needed to overcome the indifference and even hostility toward religion displayed by the frontier.

By 1850 the crusaders had done their work. Every important denomination was solidly established and few were the communities that did not enjoy the spiritual and social benefits of several varieties of organized religion. Revivals were still important weapons of the evangelical churches in re-invigorating the faithful, recovering the backsliders, and gaining new recruits, but the emotional orgies of the old “camp meetings” were no longer in good taste. Church membership, or at least occasional attendance, was the mark of respectability and good character. Young John D. Rockefeller, a faithful worker in the Baptist church from his early days, found it an aid in his business career. People had greater confidence in those

<sup>111</sup> Jan. 6, 1853.

<sup>112</sup> Apr. 22, 1872.

who did not neglect religious observances. The social and utilitarian aspects of religion were being emphasized.

There is no accurate measure of the increase in church membership in these two decades. Census figures for 1850 and 1860 cover the number of churches, their accommodations (or seating capacity), and their property value; those for 1870 give the number of separate organizations, the number of edifices, the "sittings," and the property value. The various denominations had their own records but often these were so loosely kept or were so out-of-date as to be hardly more than guesses. Judging from the increase in the number of churches, the 1850's were prosperous years for nearly all religious groups. In 1860 the Methodists were far in the lead, as in 1850, with 2,341 churches, the Presbyterians second with 631, the Baptists third with 489.<sup>113</sup> Next in order came the Lutherans, the Christians (or Disciples of Christ), and the Roman Catholics. That stronghold of the New England intellectuals, the Unitarian denomination, had but eight churches in Ohio in 1860. Yet this was seven more than had existed ten years earlier, though there were 37 Universalist churches.

Both material prosperity and adversity seemed to have helped the cause of religion in the 1850's. The first provided funds for churches and denominational schools; the second, coming with the Panic of 1857, produced a great religious revival in the early months of 1858. This nation-wide spiritual reaction against the materialism that had brought on the panic and depression affected Ohio, reaching a climax about March. Revival meetings, many conversions and union prayer meetings marked the course of this "great awakening."<sup>114</sup> Observers commented on the absence of the emotional frenzy that had characterized earlier revivals. It was different also in that the conversions were chiefly among adults and that no great evangelists were responsible for the upheaval. Yet the results were remarkable. For example, the Park Street

<sup>113</sup> *Eighth Census, Statistics of the United States in 1860* (Washington, 1866), 448-52.

<sup>114</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, March-May, 1858; *Cincinnati Gazette*, Jan.-Apr., 1858, especially weekly column of religious news.

Methodist Episcopal Church at Cincinnati added 263 members to its original roll of fewer than two hundred during the winter. The minister remarked that it did not seem to matter who preached, for the response was equally fervent.<sup>115</sup> Such instances could be multiplied. The permanent results of such a revival are difficult to measure. It did, however, provide spiritual balm for many who had lost their worldly goods in the financial crash and it seemed to have the effect of lessening crime and vice. Arrests at Cincinnati dropped sharply in 1857-1858, though other factors may have been present.<sup>116</sup>

While the Protestant denominations were gaining members in the 1850's, the Roman Catholic Church had been more than keeping pace since 1840. Finding a fertile field among the immigrants, many of them Catholics in their native lands, the Roman church reached out a helping hand to the underdog Irish and Germans with a zeal and understanding that secured solid results. While the Lutherans, the German Reformed and some others made headway with the Teutonic groups, most Protestant denominations were unable or unwilling to proselyte among the alien newcomers and were even hostile toward the Irish. Nativism, Puritanical concepts of the Sabbath, and temperance zeal raised barriers and prevented understanding and sympathy. The spread of Catholicism is shown by the creation of the new diocese of Cleveland in 1847, embracing the northern third of the State, and the organization of the eastern half of the Cincinnati diocese in 1868 as the diocese of Columbus.<sup>117</sup> Meanwhile, in 1850, Cincinnati was elevated to the rank of an archdiocese with jurisdiction over Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Michigan.

Archbishop John B. Purcell (1800-1883) was the leading figure in the Roman Catholic Church in these years.<sup>118</sup> Through his energy and perseverance large sums of money were secured in Europe from church organizations and individuals to finance Ohio Ca-

<sup>115</sup> Cincinnati Gazette, Apr. 10, 1858.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., Apr. 3, 1858.

<sup>117</sup> John H. Lamott, *History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati* (New York and Cincinnati, 1921), 98-102.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 70-85, 168-9, 233 ff.

tholicism in its years of poverty and struggle. Priests were secured abroad to supply the expanding parishes, and various religious orders were brought in to take care of welfare and educational work. Archbishop Purcell also took an active part in civil affairs, delivered many public addresses, and did not hesitate to engage in controversies with critics of the church or its policies. His opposition to the public school system—as he believed, under sectarian control—aroused Protestant ire and had political reverberations.

Cincinnati was also the residence of a notable figure in Catholic charitable work, Mrs. Sarah Worthington King Peter (1800-1877).<sup>119</sup> Mrs. Peter, the daughter of Thomas Worthington, early governor of Ohio and United States Senator, was married to Edward King of Chillicothe, and after his death, to William Peter, English consul at Philadelphia, who died in 1853. Her son, Rufus King, was a leader of the Ohio bar. Mrs. Peter was a person of rare intellectual attainments (though largely self-educated), strong convictions, native shrewdness and amazing perseverance and energy. She was the founder of a school of design for women at Philadelphia and sponsored a similar institution and art gallery at Cincinnati. On a visit to Rome in 1854 she was converted to Catholicism and found in her new faith consolation for heavy domestic bereavements and an outlet for her abundant energy. Possessed of an ample income, she appointed herself an emissary of the church of her native city to solicit aid from abroad. She made several trips to Europe, securing liberal donations for her many benevolences from Catholic rulers and other personages of high rank and wealth, and from Catholic organizations. She was instrumental in bringing to Cincinnati sisters of several religious orders to carry on the welfare work to which the closing years of her life were devoted. A familiar figure at Rome, she was cordially welcomed at all times by Pope Pius IX, and was received by princes and prelates with every mark of respect. In a period when the scope of women's activities was narrowly circumscribed, Mrs. Peter made a notable career out of her humanitarian and cultural interests. Her Cincinnati home was a center of

<sup>119</sup> Anna Shannon McAllister, *In Winter We Flourish* (New York, 1939).



culture and refinement, a gathering place for many years for the best minds of the city.

While the churches gained in numbers and wealth in the 1850's, the outbreak of the Civil War changed the picture. For a year or two it was definitely a retarding factor, as most Americans were too preoccupied with the problems of the war and with their adjustment to changing conditions to give thought to the things of the spirit. By 1863 revivals were again stimulating interest in religious matters and war prosperity was supplying funds for new buildings, missionary activities, charities and other church work.<sup>120</sup> This lessened, though it could not reverse, the tide of materialism and selfishness that marked the closing years of the great conflict. The census figures for 1870 showed smaller gains for the 1860's in numbers of churches and congregations than in the previous decade. In 1870, 6,284 church edifices were reported, as compared with 5,210 in 1860 and 3,936 in 1850.<sup>121</sup> Of the leading denominations, the Methodists had actually declined in numbers, though they were still far in the lead. The order of the others remained the same as in 1860, except that the Christians (Disciples of Christ) had displaced the Lutherans in fourth place, and the United Brethren were now sixth and the Roman Catholics seventh. Generally speaking, the materialism of the post-war years was not favorable to the things of the spirit.

<sup>120</sup> Emerson D. Fite, *Social and Industrial Conditions in the North during the Civil War* (New York, 1910), 306-10.

<sup>121</sup> *A Compendium of the Ninth Census* (Washington, 1872), 516-25.

## CHAPTER VIII

# Reforms and Reformers

OHIO was a battle ground for reformers and conservatives. Here frontier radicalism and eastern conservatism locked horns. Here New England influence was strong but by no means dominant, an important Southern and Middle States element counteracting the extreme tendencies of the Yankee. In the State's largest city, and to a lesser extent in other places, German radicals and labor reformers contributed to the social ferment, while in two or three areas a modest Quaker element exercised an influence disproportionate to its numbers. Every important reform movement had its advocates and nearly all were sufficiently organized to hold the inevitable State conventions and to petition the legislature for action. All made some headway but their goals were too distant to be reached in the 1850's. Even the wide acceptance of a general antislavery viewpoint did not mean the adoption of the doctrines of abolitionism by the great majority. There was no pronounced sentiment for political equality for the Negro, however much Ohioans deplored the slavery evil.

In this era there was little specialization in the field of reform. An enthusiast in one movement often turned up in the conventions of others. Lucius A. Hine, traveling crusader for land reform, found time to write letters on scientific agriculture and apparently to practice it, besides attending peace conventions, women's rights meetings, school conventions and other reform assemblages. Samuel Lewis is best known as the pioneer advocate of an adequate public school system, yet Lewis was also an ardent abolitionist, an enthusiastic temperance crusader, and a member of the Ohio Peace Society. Charles Reemelin, Cincinnati's leading German citizen, not only was a radical opponent of banks, an earnest advocate of the homestead policy, a believer in personal liberty and an adversary

of temperance and church influence in government, but was one of the fathers of the Lancaster Reform School for youthful law-breakers and the author of a scientific treatise on the culture of the grape. Mrs. Frances Dana Gage, early leader of the woman's rights movement, was almost equally interested in temperance reform and abolition, and during the war, in caring for the freedmen. Even Salmon P. Chase did not confine himself to the antislavery movement but had a broadly liberal program in the early fifties, while the Free Democratic party platform in 1853 was a mosaic of reforms.

Reform tendencies and liberal movements in such fields as labor, agriculture, banking and currency, education, and slavery are discussed in other chapters leaving the principal movements of a humanitarian and moral character to be considered here.

Except for the slavery issue, no question was more persistently agitated by the moral elements of the community than that of temperance. Though it never assumed the political importance of the antislavery movement, it played a significant part as a local question on many occasions and once, at least, developed into a State-wide issue to threaten the unity of the existing parties. Throughout the decade of the 1850's it remained a rather troublesome question for politicians and a social and moral reform of no slight importance. Though the temperance movement failed to bring about total abstinence laws, it was undoubtedly a great force in arousing public opinion against the evils of drunkenness and in converting many individuals to a life of sobriety.

Confined at first to the Protestant churches, the movement against intoxicating liquors was drawn into the political arena with the adoption of the new Constitution. The members of the convention of 1850-1851, unwilling to endanger the success of their handiwork by acting upon the liquor question, submitted to a separate popular vote, along with the constitution, a clause that no license should be granted to traffic in intoxicating liquors.<sup>1</sup> It was adopted by a vote of 113,239 to 104,255,<sup>2</sup> a victory for the temperance forces, for a

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Smith, *Report of the Debates and Proceedings of the Convention for the Revision of the Constitution of the State of Ohio, 1850-51* (Columbus, 1851), II. 694-5, 711-23, for the debates on the question.

<sup>2</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, July 7, 1851.

licensing system had existed almost from the beginning of settlement. As a matter of fact it had no immediate practical importance, for it left the sale of liquor still to be regulated or prohibited by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, it encouraged the temperance reformers who now turned their attention to the enactment of prohibitory legislation.

The first assembly under the new Constitution found itself confronted with the question. The liquor problem had not at the time of the State election of 1851 attracted much attention. Though it was charged in the campaign that a temperance paper was supporting a slate of candidates for State offices composed mostly of Whigs,<sup>3</sup> other issues were of much greater significance and temperance was distinctly subordinate in most localities. Thus the assembly's attitude was not known in advance of its session. To put pressure upon the members a great mass temperance convention was held at Columbus in February. This was so largely attended that it had to be held in the State House yard to accommodate the crowds. The convention voted in favor of the Maine Law, thus taking a stand for strict prohibition,<sup>4</sup> but opposed making temperance a political question.<sup>5</sup> Yet politics could hardly be eliminated. The Whig State organ was cautious but not unfriendly to temperance,<sup>6</sup> and the leaders of the mass convention were Whigs or Free Soilers, while the Democratic press was generally cold toward the Maine Law, if not actually hostile. The tendency was thus toward a party alignment on the issue.

The second session of the General Assembly in the winter of 1852-1853 saw the agitation renewed. Another convention in January demanded the Maine Law and made plans for an active campaign.<sup>7</sup> A women's organization was perfected by a State convention in the same month and advocated the formation of local female temperance societies.<sup>8</sup> The large Democratic majority in the assembly,

<sup>3</sup> "Washington" in *Ohio Statesman*, Sept. 25, 1851.

<sup>4</sup> Maine had just adopted prohibition, and the term "Maine Law" was widely used to mean complete prohibition of the liquor traffic.

<sup>5</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Feb. 26, 27, 1852.

<sup>6</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 14, 1852.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 6, 1853.

<sup>8</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Jan. 18, 1853; *Ohio Cultivator*, IX (Feb. 1, 1853), 44-5.



however, dared not take so drastic a step as the enactment of the Maine Law, and though it threw a sop to the temperance men in the form of a regulatory law for townships, this was far from what the reformers desired and the question was passed to the campaign of 1853.<sup>9</sup>

Of the three political parties, only the Free Soilers, or Free Democrats, as they now preferred to call themselves, took a definite stand. At their State convention a strong temperance resolution was included in the platform,<sup>10</sup> and the candidate for governor, Samuel Lewis, and the leading party organs gave the Maine Law a hearty indorsement.<sup>11</sup> The radical reforming tendencies of the party were not confined to the slavery question but, especially in 1853, were spreading to include almost every significant reform proposal. The temperance cause, a moral issue of strong appeal to the puritan element in the New England centers, was particularly welcome to the party whose backbone lay in the Western Reserve. It had everything to gain and nothing to lose by upholding the Maine Law.

The Whig party officially took no stand on the Maine Law. Neither the State convention nor the candidate for governor, Nelson Barrere, expressed any opinion. Caution seemed wisdom in the face of the large Whig vote in cities like Columbus, Dayton and Zanesville where the Maine Law was none too popular. Nevertheless, in most localities the Whigs were friendly to temperance. The Maine Law did not threaten the safety of the Union, it touched no vested interest that was of particular influence in the party, and it appealed to that sober, respectable, church-going element that comprised the backbone of the party's support. Locally, if not as a State organization, the Whigs tended to ally with the temperance movement.

The Democrats found themselves in a quandary. The foreign-born and the workingmen of the cities were hostile to the Maine Law and their vote bulked large in the totals, but among the rural

<sup>9</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, IX (Apr. 1, 1853), 107; *Ohio Columbian*, Feb. 24, 1853.

<sup>10</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Jan. 13, 14, 1853.

<sup>11</sup> *Ohio Columbian*, Feb. 24, Apr. 7, 1853; *Cleveland True Democrat* (weekly), Apr. 27, 1853.

Democracy temperance had much support. Hence a cautious policy had to be followed. The State organ, the *Ohio Statesman*, warned candidates against committing the party on the Maine Law or trying to add to the platform without authority.<sup>12</sup> It refused space to letters on the mooted question and attempted to keep it in the background. The local organizations and legislative candidates and the county press, where compelled to take a stand, decided according to local sentiment. In general, the legislative candidates of the Democrats tended to be more unfriendly to the temperance cause than did those of the Whigs. The State candidates, like the platform, took refuge in silence.

The temperance organization did not give its support to any party. It was interested primarily in controlling the next legislature and at a State convention held in mid-summer avowed its intention of supporting Maine Law candidates regardless of their party affiliations.<sup>13</sup> To the county temperance alliances was left the task of ascertaining which candidates on the party tickets would pledge themselves to support prohibition. If none were found, independents were put into the race. Fusion tickets were sometimes arranged, especially between Whigs and Free Democrats, to prevent a division of the temperance forces. These tactics were most successful in the Reserve counties where the declining fortunes of Whiggery and the antislavery sentiment of both parties there made cooperation easy.<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere the temperance alliances more often indorsed the Whig candidates though occasionally a Democrat or an independent was favored. The Free Democratic candidates, lacking in strength outside the Reserve, were not usually indorsed as their chances of election were too slight.

The State temperance convention had not indorsed any candidates for State offices as the Maine Law was not directly involved here. The governor, it should be remembered, had no veto power. But the local alliances often made indorsements, especially for

<sup>12</sup> Aug. 19, 26, Sept. 27, 1853.

<sup>13</sup> *Ohio Columbian*, July 14, 1853.

<sup>14</sup> *Cleveland True Democrat*, Aug. 17, 24, Sept. 21, 1853.

governor. In view of the silence of William Medill and Nelson Barrere, Democratic and Whig nominees, the temperance advocates turned to Samuel Lewis, Free Democratic candidate, the well-known educational and antislavery as well as temperance reformer. Furthermore, General Samuel F. Cary's *Organ of Temperance Reform* indorsed Lewis.<sup>15</sup> The Whig candidate for lieutenant-governor, Dr. Isaac J. Allen, committed himself through a public letter to both the temperance and antislavery causes and won the general support of the Free Democrats whose candidate for this office had withdrawn.<sup>16</sup> Otherwise the candidates of the two major parties refrained from any expression of opinion on the Maine Law.

The temperance reformers made strenuous efforts for their cause and succeeded in stirring up much excitement over the question. Such well known temperance orators as Neal Dow, Dr. Jewett, and General Samuel Cary made speeches in the course of the campaign, and Samuel Lewis and other Free Democratic speakers devoted almost as much attention to temperance as to the slavery question. Local meetings, usually addressed by Protestant ministers, aroused interest in the smaller places. Women's auxiliaries were organized and a mass meeting of the Women's State Temperance Association was held at the State Fair at Dayton in September.<sup>17</sup> The *Ohio Cultivator* appealed to farmers to support the Maine Law, arguing that the corn consumed by the distilleries, one-seventeenth of the total production, could be more profitably used in feeding hogs and for other purposes.<sup>18</sup> The anti-Maine Law forces were less active though a speaker was employed to debate the issue with Dr. Jewett and a campaign paper made its appearance at Columbus printed in both English and German.

But Ohio was not ready for the Maine Law. Its sturdy individualism, inheritance of frontier days, balked at this invasion of personal liberty and voted it down by an overwhelming majority. The drastic character of the proposed remedy reacted against its sponsors

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in *Ohio Columbian*, Aug. 4, 1853.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 22, 28, 1853.

<sup>17</sup> *Ohio Cultivator* IX (Sept. 1, 1853), 270, (Oct. 1, 1853), 301.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, IX (Sept. 15, 1853), 282, (Oct. 1, 1853), 299.

and drove many moderates into opposition. A Democratic, anti-Maine Law assembly was chosen and a Democratic State ticket rode to victory over an apathetic and divided Whiggery and a third party which could not, despite its enthusiasm, rise to the rank of a major party.<sup>19</sup> However, the adherents of Lewis capitalized the temperance issue to good advantage, polling over 50,000 votes, the largest total amassed by the antislavery party since its organization.

The disastrous defeat of 1853 was a fatal blow to the Maine Law cause. Not again for many years was serious consideration given to such a proposal. Temperance in a milder form continued, however, to be a subject for agitation. Even the Democratic party was unwilling to be regarded as a friend of the liquor traffic, and the new assembly surprised its critics by enacting a law against the sale of intoxicating liquors to be drunk on the premises where sold and forbidding sales to minors, intoxicated persons and habitual drunkards.<sup>20</sup> It exempted native wines, beer, ale and cider and in its enforcement features was much less stringent than the Maine Law. In effect, the law left to each community the solution of the problem of the liquor traffic and officials acted according to their interpretation of local sentiment. That it was rather generally disregarded is quite evident. In 1859 an ardent friend of temperance was deploring the fact that free trade in whisky was almost the order of the day,<sup>21</sup> while in at least one community—the little village of Albany in Athens County—the irate temperance ladies had found it necessary to take the law into their own hands and destroy the goods of the local liquor seller.<sup>22</sup>

The reorganization of parties following the Kansas-Nebraska Act thrust the temperance question far into the background. Unlike their Indiana co-workers, the Ohio Anti-Nebraska leaders refused to endanger their ticket by adopting a temperance plank. Nevertheless, in the campaign of 1855 the Democrats at Cincin-

<sup>19</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Nov. 19, Dec. 14, 1853, for the vote.

<sup>20</sup> *Ohio Laws, Acts*, 51 Assemb., LII (1854), 153-7. It strengthened and enlarged an act of 1851.

<sup>21</sup> *Athens Messenger*, Mar. 11, 1859.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 5, 1856.



nati charged the Republicans with Maine Law sympathies and made an effective appeal to the Germans on this issue.<sup>23</sup> The Republican Assembly of 1856-1857 did consider the question of a prohibitory law to the extent of passing such a bill through the Senate but it was killed in the House.<sup>24</sup> Probably a strongly worded protest by a leading German Republican of Cincinnati to Governor Chase was a factor in killing the proposal. Thereafter the party avoided the question as the German element was decidedly hostile to restrictive measures and its wishes could not well be disregarded. Governor Chase, in his annual message of 1859, called the attention of the assembly to the evils of intemperance but the only positive remedy he could suggest was an asylum for inebriates.<sup>25</sup>

The end of the decade found the temperance cause but little advanced over 1850 despite ten years of agitation. Restrictive laws were not enforced, the Maine Law seemed farther away than ever, breweries and distilleries were turning out enormous quantities of liquor, and the fame of "Ohio Whisky" was nation-wide. Cincinnati, with over 2,000 establishments for the sale of liquor, was a particular eyesore to the temperance cause.<sup>26</sup> Here Sunday closing ordinances went unenforced and German beer gardens attracted throngs of citizens whenever the weather was favorable.<sup>27</sup>

Yet, in the face of these difficulties, the temperance reformers did not despair. A State temperance convention in 1860, the first since 1857, was largely attended and repeated the resolution of its predecessors for the Maine Law.<sup>28</sup> The local lodges of the Sons of Temperance and similar organizations and the various Protestant churches kept up a desultory warfare in their own communities. Temperance lectures were usually included in the repertoire of the woman's rights crusaders and occasionally a reformer found place on the lyceum platform. The drunkard's fate was a favorite theme for story writers and Ohio's most popular woman novelist,

<sup>23</sup> Cincinnati *Enquirer*, Oct. 2, 7, 12, 14, 1855.

<sup>24</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Apr. 17, 1857.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 4, 1859.

<sup>26</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, July 21, 1860.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Aug. 22, 1860.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 16, 1860.

Metta Victoria Fuller, wrote *The Senator's Son* as a piece of temperance propaganda.<sup>29</sup> The effects of all these things are difficult to estimate. Probably many drinkers were reformed, boys and girls pledged to total abstinence and to further the temperance cause and a public opinion created which regarded the liquor traffic with increasing hostility. These improvements, however, do not appear on the statute books nor show in statistical tables and the gains seem disproportionately small for the effort involved. Only when compared with the pioneer days does the progress of temperance in the 1850's appear evident.

The Civil War, producing, as wars do, a let-down in moral standards, rendered the liquor problem more acute than ever. Boys around eighteen and twenty years of age acquired the drink habit and in many instances never recovered. Drunkenness was a characteristic of reunions of former soldiers. Temperance workers and other social reformers, deflected for a time into the slavery and freedman's problems, again took up the gauge of battle with "Demon Rum" and the temperance societies resumed their activities. The Sons of Temperance and the Good Templars, which had existed before the war, were revived and extended in many communities. Local temperance alliances attempted to coordinate their work and the efforts of the Protestant churches. Inevitably they were drawn into politics, either to secure local regulatory ordinances or to elect officials to enforce them, once they were passed. For example, the village of McConnellsville, the little city of Youngstown and the near-metropolis of Cleveland were confronted with much the same problem in 1869-1870.<sup>30</sup> Local elections in all three turned on the liquor and law enforcement issues. The "drys" won in the first two instances but the reform wave soon subsided. At Youngstown juries refused to convict saloonkeepers and presently even Sunday closing was ignored.

<sup>29</sup> See Chap. VI.

<sup>30</sup> Robert H. Bremner, Morgan County, 1865-1870, a seminar paper, Ohio State University, 1941; James G. Butler, *A History of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley* (Chicago, 1921), I, 201-5; *Cleveland Leader*, Mar. 30-Apr. 9, 1867, Mar. 25-Apr. 8, 1869.

At Cleveland the old moral forces of Yankeeedom wrestled with the immigrant liberals for several years over the liquor question in city elections. The dominant Republicans lost their German support in the April municipal election of 1867 when the Democrats named a German as their mayoralty candidate and espoused the liberal side on the Sunday closing issue. The Democratic victory, however, was limited to this one office. The *Leader*, speaking for the temperance Republicans, put the problem in this wise: "We cannot give the German his Sunday beer and refuse the Irishman his whiskey."<sup>31</sup> Two years later a group of temperance men, angry at Republican hypocrisy on the liquor issue, put their own city ticket in the field. This was merely to test their strength, for they did not expect to win. Despite attacks by the *Leader* for their indirect assistance to the "whiskey party," they refused to abandon their ticket and polled 1,049 votes, contributing to Republican defeat. This independent movement was the germ of the Prohibition party.<sup>32</sup>

Alarmed at reports of a movement to have the State restrictive legislation affecting saloons repealed, a group of temperance supporters formed an "Anti-Repeal Association" at Cleveland in August, 1871. When Republican candidates for the assembly refused to commit themselves, the "Anti-Repealers" allied with the Democrats on a fusion temperance ticket. They were defeated but the Republicans were badly frightened. Control of the legislature and a United States Senatorship had hinged on the outcome.<sup>33</sup>

Non-political agitation drew considerable feminine support. Holding fairs and bazaars to raise money, circulating temperance propaganda, persuading young people to "take the pledge," and similar activities were in the province of women's work. Some went even further. At Greenfield, Highland County, in 1865, a group of temperance women wrecked the local whiskey shops, while at Cleveland in 1871 some members of the Women's Temperance League visited all the saloons in one city ward and tried to persuade the

<sup>31</sup> Apr. 9, 1867.

<sup>32</sup> See Chap. XV.

<sup>33</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Aug.-Oct., 1871.

saloonkeepers to quit business. Only one acceded to their requests, though several were willing to sell out.<sup>34</sup> This type of direct action foreshadowed the crusade in 1873-1874.

Appeals to eliminate liquor from the home appeared in the newspapers. The *Cleveland Leader* in 1870 commented unfavorably on the growing custom of serving wines and liquors to callers on New Year's Day. It spoke of "scions of our 'first families' staggering through the streets toward nightfall on New Year's Day." <sup>35</sup> In the *Cincinnati Commercial* appeared this appeal by the Hamilton County Temperance Committee to the ladies of Cincinnati: "Will you offer to him who comes with the kindly greeting, the sparkling wine cup? Will you give to him who comes with good wishes for your continued happiness, the intoxicating draught?" <sup>36</sup>

State legal restrictions on the liquor traffic were tightened by the Adair Law of 1870.<sup>37</sup> The law of 1854 was amended to permit damage suits against a liquor dealer in any case where a person was injured in person or property or means of support by an intoxicated person or in consequence of the intoxication, whether the sale of liquor was legal or not. The old act had applied only to illegal sale. The new law made the owner or lessor of the building wherein liquors were sold liable for damages. The real estate was also to be held liable for fines, costs and damages assessed against the person occupying it. Leases were void where intoxicating liquors were sold on the premises. These provisions and the court's power under the earlier law to declare tippling houses public nuisances and to close them up invoked a wave of prosecutions and lawsuits and a demand for a modification and a clarification of the law by liquor dealers and landlords. The next assembly debated the question but made no change, though court interpretation lessened somewhat the stringency of the law. Local sentiment determined its enforcement as a rule.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 10, 1871; *Ohio State Journal*, July 18, 1865.

<sup>35</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, Jan. 1, 1870.

<sup>36</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Jan. 1, 1872.

<sup>37</sup> Liquor legislation is summarized in Emilius O. Randall and Daniel J. Ryan, *History of Ohio* (New York, 1912), IV, 528-9.



On the whole, the reformers had made little progress by 1873 in their efforts to confine "Demon Rum" in legal shackles. Yet the temperance movement was well organized and enthusiastic, and the extremists had even started a third party. The war against liquor apparently had just begun.

Paralleling the temperance movement and drawing sustenance in a small way from it was the cause of sex equality. This early woman's rights movement was three-fold in its scope.<sup>38</sup> It involved the economic progress of women, it worked for an equality of legal status for both sexes and its ultimate goal was the right to vote. Since the second and third were matters of legislation, they received somewhat greater emphasis from the reformers but the first was recognized as fundamental to the complete emancipation of the female sex.<sup>39</sup>

The economic life of women in 1850 was confined principally to the home. Household tasks were their special province, whether in their own home or in another's, and only such occupations as dress or shirt making, millinery, and teaching in the primary schools were regarded as suitable to feminine skill, strength and temperament. Nor was there, prior to the industrial era, great need for the labor of women outside the home. Farming required manual labor of the most arduous type for which women were obviously unfitted. The skilled trades were in much the same category. Indeed, the tradition of woman's physical weakness was so strong that the health of girls was impaired by the belief that vigorous exercise was beyond their strength as well as unladylike. The back-breaking labors of the household and the strain of bearing and rearing children were regarded, on the other hand, as entirely within the scope of every woman's physical powers. As a consequence, the delicacy of women was not only a convention but too often a reality.<sup>40</sup> The most far-sighted of the feminist leaders realized

<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage* (Rochester, 1889), I, 101-70, Appendix, 810-20, covers certain Ohio aspects.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 816.

<sup>40</sup> For example, see *Ohio Cultivator*, VIII (Mar. 1, 1852), 78-9; *Ladies' Repository*, XI (1851), 26-8, 231-2, XII (1852), 232-3.

the seriousness of this barrier to emancipation and attacked it by attempting to educate women to the need for outdoor exercise, fresh air and a knowledge of their own bodies. Almost every woman's rights lecturer devoted one or more lectures in her course to anatomy, physiology and hygiene. One of the best of these, Sarah Coates, used a model female figure with detachable parts for demonstration purposes.

Industrial progress by the 1850's was coming to the aid of the feminists in emancipating women from the bondage of the home. The need for cheap labor was overcoming the scruples against women workers. One example well illustrates this trend. An industrial survey of Cincinnati in 1860 by a committee of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Exchange revealed that women and girls were employed extensively in clothing and tailoring establishments, cloak and mantilla making, boot and shoe manufacturing, cotton and batting factories, printing and bookbinding establishments, and in smaller numbers as tanners and curriers, bakers, and makers of lucifer matches.<sup>41</sup> The total of women and girls employed in industrial pursuits, as indicated by this rather incomplete survey, was between five and six thousand. Perhaps three-fourths were found in the clothing and tailoring establishments, for which Cincinnati was noted, but in the other occupations girl workers were numerous enough to be no longer a novelty. In Cleveland in 1850 some employers attempted to use the cheap labor of women and girls in breaking a strike of the journeymen tailors for higher wages.<sup>42</sup> The thralldom of industry was beginning to replace the bondage of the home.

The Civil War provided employment opportunities for women, though there were complaints that too many men were working in stores and holding other positions that women could fill and that wages were still too low in work open to them.<sup>43</sup> Industrial ex-

<sup>41</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Apr. 17, 1860. An error in tabulation gives the total as 1,422, while 4,156 are listed in clothing and tailoring establishments alone. Many of these did sewing for their employers in their own homes, but at least they were gainfully employed.

<sup>42</sup> Cleveland *Herald*, Aug. 19, 1850.

<sup>43</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Aug. 14, 1862, Nov. 25, Dec. 8, 1863.

pansion, after the war, particularly in such manufactures as paper, woollens, bagging, pottery and boots and shoes, afforded employment for considerable numbers, but the wages were insufficient to provide self-support for those living away from home.<sup>44</sup> Shirt manufacturing, now carried on with sewing machines, continued to use female labor, as did the makers of ladies' cloaks and suits.<sup>45</sup> In the manufacture of clothing the practice of subletting the work to journeymen tailors who employed women on a piecework basis resulted in miserable wages under sweatshop conditions. In most lines of manufacturing weekly wages of three and four dollars were quite common. An oversupply of female labor characterized even the prosperous years around 1870,<sup>46</sup> chiefly because of the barriers against women workers in so many fields and the lack of training of most girls for positions requiring special skills. Of the 83,520 females over ten years of age gainfully employed in Ohio in 1870, 51,310 were domestic servants, 17,616 were employed in manufactures and mining, 7,970 were teachers, and 417 were clerks in stores.<sup>47</sup> Woman's economic place was still chiefly in the home. Only 8.5 per cent of the females over ten years old were reported as having occupations.

Labor saving devices, particularly the sewing machine, were welcomed by the advocates of the woman's movement as releasing the time and energy of the housewife for self-improvement. Mrs. Josephine C. Bateham, writing in the *Ohio Cultivator*, believed that the sewing machine would also improve the health of women by releasing them from the strain of sewing closely and steadily for long hours by hand.<sup>48</sup> Others urged the use of washing machines, churns, carpet sweepers and similar household appliances.<sup>49</sup> These were, of course, operated by hand. On the farm, where the lot of

<sup>44</sup> Ohio Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1878 (Columbus, 1879), 222.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 224, 226-9.

<sup>46</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, Sept. 27, 1870; *Cincinnati Commercial*, Oct. 10, 1870, Jan. 27, 1871, letter "The Social Evil."

<sup>47</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report*, 1877, 39-42, giving figures compiled from the census of 1870.

<sup>48</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, XIII (May 1, 1857), 140-1.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI (Aug. 15, 1860), 254-5, (Sept. 1, 1860), 270.

the wife and mother was usually a hard one, any mechanical appliance would have been a relief.

But entry into business or professional life was not easy. Where the demand for cheap labor did not exist, the conventions were against the employment of women. Feminists might argue that most occupations were within women's natural capacities, but where could they find the opportunities to test their proficiency or to acquire the necessary training or education for a professional or business career? What attorney would permit a woman to study law in his office or what skilled trades would receive girl apprentices? Where were the professional schools to train ambitious girls for the professions? What merchant would prefer female clerks if men were available? Sometimes a woman employer appeared who favored her own sex, as was the case of Ella Wentworth who, in establishing *The Literary Journal* at Cincinnati, employed twelve girls in the printing establishment and had applications from 700 others.<sup>50</sup> However, this experiment was short-lived.

A significant attempt to break across the professional barriers was the organization of an association to encourage medical education for women. Medicine, of all the professions, was believed to be especially adapted to the female temperament but the educational problem had to be faced. The Ohio Female Medical Education Society was organized at Cleveland in the comparatively friendly atmosphere of the Western Reserve in 1852 and presently had branches in a number of places, largely through the activities of Mrs. T. C. Severance of Cleveland and Dr. Harriet K. Hunt, widely known Boston physician, who traveled through the State as agents for the association.<sup>51</sup> There is no evidence that the organization achieved any important results but its very existence is proof of the growing feeling that women must act for themselves if they were to gain their place in the sun.

While woman's economic progress was the subject of much concern to the reformers, her civil status aroused even greater efforts.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, X (Jan. 15, 1854), 28-9.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, IX (Jan. 1, 1850), 12-3; XI (Mar. 1, 1855), 76.



The legal position of women in Ohio, as in so many other states in this period, was one of distinct inferiority.<sup>52</sup> Both with regard to property rights and with respect to control of the children a married woman was subject to her husband. For example, he controlled all the personal property, however acquired, even including the earnings of the wife. The only exceptions were cases where the husband was intemperate, idiotic, or insane. The real estate was likewise at the husband's disposal, excluding the widow's dower of one-third. At his death the wife received of the personal property only her clothing and ornaments and a bed and bedding, with some additional household goods if there were minor children living with her. All else became a part of his estate. Of the real estate she received only the use of one-third for life though it might have been acquired with her money or through her efforts. As to guardianship of the children, the father was the sole authority, being permitted to will away even unborn children to the guardianship of strangers. In the absence of a will the widow could not act as both administrator and guardian, which meant that administrative expenses would consume a larger sum than otherwise. The potentialities for domestic tyranny were thus almost as great as in the relationship of master and slave. It is small wonder that a woman's rights movement took root in Ohio.

The agitation for legal and political equality began as an organized movement in Ohio in 1850. Prior to that time occasional female lecturers had spoken in the State on slavery, temperance, religion and various other subjects, interspersed with a certain amount of woman's rights propaganda.<sup>53</sup> Frances Wright, Ernestine Rose and Abby Kelly Foster were the best known, though two Oberlin students, Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown, were also testing their oratorical powers on the public platform. Elizabeth Blackwell had gone east from Cincinnati to achieve fame as the first woman physician with a duly accredited college degree. The

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII (Feb. 1, 1857), 44-5; *Ohio Farmer*, IX, (Dec. 29, 1860), 414; "Report of the Select Committee on Giving the Rights of Suffrage to Females," *Senate Journal*, 52 Assemb., 2 Sess., 1857, pp. 518-27.

<sup>53</sup> *History of Woman Suffrage*, I, Chapters I, V, VI, *passim*.

outburst of liberalism around 1848, that year of European revolutions, and the example of the famous Seneca Falls woman's rights convention in New York led to a general movement throughout the country for the emancipation of women. In Ohio the immediate occasion was the calling of the convention of 1850 to frame a new State constitution. In April of that same year the first woman's rights convention assembled at Salem, Columbiana County, composed largely of antislavery radicals from the immediate neighborhood. Mrs. Mariana Johnson was president pro tempore and Mrs. Betsy M. Cowles permanent president.

Its immediate purpose was to memorialize the Constitutional Convention for equal rights.<sup>54</sup> Letters were read from such eastern leaders as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Lucy Stone and resolutions were passed setting forth the demands of the reformers on a variety of subjects. Petitions to the Constitutional Convention won little support, however, that body voting down a resolution to eliminate the word "male," 72 nays against 7 yeas,<sup>55</sup> though the signers to petitions for equal rights numbered 7,901, and for suffrage, 2,106.<sup>56</sup>

Dr. Norton S. Townshend, that valiant advocate of other notable reforms, demonstrated the thoroughness of his liberalism by making the one speech on behalf of woman suffrage. The following extract shows its tenor:

"I know it is said that woman is even now represented, and that her interests are safer in the hands of fathers, husbands, brothers and sons, than they could be in her own. If this is true, how comes it to pass that woman is now, in this enlightened and in this Christian country, subject to so many legal disabilities. Every one knows, or ought to know, that under the common law, woman has scarcely any legal existence, and under some circumstances, her rights of person and property are utterly disregarded. If woman's interests have suffered so much, even in the hands of fathers and brothers, I

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-11; *Cleveland Herald*, May 22, 1850.

<sup>55</sup> Smith, *Debates and Proceedings*, II, 555.

<sup>56</sup> Letter of Mrs. R. A. S. Janney, in *History of Woman Suffrage*, I, 122.

think it is high time they were entrusted to her own keeping.”<sup>57</sup>

Annual conventions of woman's rights advocates were held for several years after 1850, the one at Massillon in 1852 organizing the “Ohio Woman's Rights Association.”<sup>58</sup> Lecturers traveled over the State and petitions were sent to the General Assembly to stir it into action.

The Republican legislature of 1856-1857, elected on a wave of antislavery feeling, seemed to offer a ray of hope to the liberals and Governor Chase recommended to its consideration the matter of woman's property rights. The assembly then proceeded to enact a law that no married man should dispose of any personal property exempt from sale upon execution without his wife's consent and that any married woman whose husband should desert her or fail to provide for his family might contract for her own and her childrer's labor and collect her own and their earnings.<sup>59</sup> These were slight gains for so much effort, but the feminist leaders did not give up. The Democratic Assembly of 1858-1859 proved indifferent to reform, but its Republican successor of 1860-1861 was finally induced to act, though not until its second session in 1861.

By the act of April 3, 1861,<sup>60</sup> a married woman was given the right to own real estate, whether acquired by her before marriage or afterward, and to lease it for not over three years in her own name. Personal property belonging to her before marriage or acquired or inherited afterward and all wages earned by her were placed under her complete control. The wife's property was not to be taken for the debts of the husband. A married woman whose husband deserted her or failed to provide for the family might make contracts for her own labor and that of her minor children, provided a court so authorized. By a separate act the amount of personal property which a widow might retain from her deceased husband's estate was considerably enlarged.<sup>61</sup> The guardianship question was not acted

<sup>57</sup> Smith, *Debates and Proceedings*, II, 555.

<sup>58</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, VIII (June 15, 1852), 188-90.

<sup>59</sup> *Ohio Laws, Acts*, 52 Assemb., 2 Sess., LIV (1857), 219.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 54 Assemb., 2 Sess., LVIII (1861), 54-5.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

upon by the assembly. Absolute legal equality with men, even with regard to property rights, was not achieved in this legislation, but the reformers had the satisfaction of knowing that a substantial step had been taken in the right direction.

With regard to political rights the feminist leaders ran against a stone wall. Many broad-minded males, like Horace Mann, sympathized with them in their cry for economic freedom and civil rights but drew the line at politics. Indeed, the other phases of the woman's rights movement were often overlooked by its opponents who saw in it only a demand for feminine participation in politics, an idea peculiarly abhorrent in an age that prized the proprieties above all else. "She was never intended for stern conflict with the open world; and the moment she steps upon the arena of man she ceases to be a blessing or an ornament,"<sup>62</sup> wrote a feminine critic. Even the temperance movement, ardently supported as it was by the woman's rights leaders, did not welcome the participation of women in political life. General Samuel F. Cary, Ohio's best known temperance leader, wrote and presented a resolution at the World's Temperance Convention excluding women from the platform, which drew upon him a sharp censure from the Women's State Temperance Society in 1853.<sup>63</sup> After a decade of agitation, it could not be said truthfully that the woman's rights movement was in 1860 any nearer its goal of equal suffrage than it was ten years earlier.

The reasons for the slow progress of the feminist cause are several. First was the general hostility of conservatives to any significant social reform. Fears of the "loosening of the social bonds, and the disruptions of domestic unity"<sup>64</sup> were enough to send the timorous scurrying into the camp of the opposition. Scepticism and revolution might result from such an agitation. The clergy, generally conservative at the inception of reforms, were, with few exceptions, unfriendly to the woman's rights crusade. That they were a powerful

<sup>62</sup> Lucy Towne, "The Sphere of Woman," *Ladies' Repository*, XI (1851), 251-2. See also *ibid.*, XIV (1854), 161-4, and XVII (1857), 726-8.

<sup>63</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, IX (Oct. 1, 1853), 301.

<sup>64</sup> *Ladies' Repository*, X (1850), 218-20.



force in the conservative ranks is evident from the hostility of so many of the feminist leaders to the ministers as a class.<sup>65</sup>

A second reason was the tyranny of social custom. That prudery which disapproved of women who dared to mount horses and which looked upon the ankle-length bloomer costume as almost indecent could not countenance a change in woman's status. Huge crowds might stand agape at the novel spectacle of ladies' equestrian exhibitions at the State and county fairs but many were doubtless drawn there by the feeling that they were about to witness something exceedingly improper. Certainly public sentiment was sharply divided over the propriety of such things. There were even communities that would scarcely tolerate equitation for females. This despotism of propriety was no small matter for the reformers to face. Even the Women's State Temperance Society was criticised as an improper activity, and a delegation of Dayton ladies appeared before the convention of 1853 to reprove the members for their unseemly acts in calling conventions and seeking notoriety.<sup>66</sup>

A third difficulty for the feminist movement in Ohio and the West generally was the lack of a satisfactory organ to voice their demands. The newspapers, perhaps from a sense of chivalry, treated women lecturers rather kindly and did not usually deride their efforts. Instead they rather damned the movement with faint praise and, what was even worse, devoted small space to it in their columns. One notably friendly paper, the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* of Salem, was too radical on the slavery question to have a very wide circle of readers. Western magazines were nearly all too short-lived to be of much assistance had they so willed. Efforts to maintain an independent organ devoted to the cause of emancipation were unsuccessful. The only substantial woman's periodical in the West, the *Ladies' Repository*, published under the auspices of the Methodist Church at Cincinnati, was primarily of a religious character and consequently hostile to reform and innovation.

From a quarter least expected came what was probably the most

<sup>65</sup> *History of Woman Suffrage*, I, 16, 152.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 119-20.

effective aid that woman's rights received from the press. The *Ohio Cultivator*, a semi-monthly farm paper published at Columbus by M. B. Bateham, had a "Ladies' Department," conducted by the editor's wife, Mrs. Josephine C. Bateham. The latter, a product of Oberlin and a staunch believer in woman's rights, permitted communications from some of the best known feminist leaders to appear in her columns for several years. In 1856 the *Cultivator* changed ownership and Mrs. Bateham retired. The new editor, Col. S. D. Harris, unfortunately had little interest in woman's rights. Though occasionally giving space to Mrs. Bateham and some of the earlier contributors, the *Cultivator* ceased to be of any real importance to the cause. In general, with the press unfriendly or indifferent, reform made slow headway.

The greatest obstacle to the feminist cause was the indifference or hostility of the great majority of women. "I congratulate the true women of the age, I congratulate my country," wrote a Methodist divine, "that these ebullitions of mistaken ambition, these sad demonstrations of the irrational uneasiness of the times, have met with no flattering response from the gentler sex. These masculine conventions and harangues, books and papers, have hardly made a ripple upon the surface of divinely created female instincts, of pure, cultivated taste, or of sound common sense."<sup>67</sup> Somewhat bitterly, one of the ablest of the reformers admitted the truth of what the narrow-minded cleric had asserted. "They hate machinery as they do 'Woman's Rights'; and what is more, have not the slightest idea what a woman, born to the privilege of baking and brewing, pickling and stewing, can want of more education and intellectual culture. . . . You must culture women into a knowledge of their actual needs, before you can make them appreciate time or education."<sup>68</sup> This was the great problem of the feminist leaders for many years, to arouse women to a realization of their needs. Enlightenment must precede reform.

Considering the obstacles they faced, the little minority of agi-

<sup>67</sup> *Ladies' Repository*, XIII (1853), 340.

<sup>68</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, XVI (Sept. 1, 1860), 270, letter of Mrs. Frances Dana Gage.

tators must have been courageous, if nothing else, to attempt the conquest of a man-controlled world. The best known leaders lived in the East and could give only occasional aid to their sisters on the cultural frontier, though on two occasions, 1853 and 1855, they held their "National Woman's Rights Convention" in Ohio at Cleveland and Cincinnati respectively. Frances Wright, earliest of feminist reformers, who spent her last years at Cincinnati in retirement, died in 1852 just as the Ohio movement was getting well under way. Her association with radicals of all stamps would probably have militated against her influence in any case. Mrs. Abby Kelly Foster did much lecturing in the State and was one of the most radical and outspoken reformers, described by one editor as "smart, a good speaker, and as bitter and unfair as the devil would have her be."<sup>69</sup> Years of fighting for unpopular causes before hostile audiences were not conducive to soft speech and persuasive feminine arts of appeal. If she seemed embittered and sarcastic, Abby Kelly Foster at least possessed a dauntless courage and a crusading spirit that never quailed.

Less extreme, and therefore more effective in appealing to public opinion, were Mrs. Hannah M. Tracy Cutler and Mrs. Frances Dana Gage. The former, a widow with three children to support, had studied at Oberlin while keeping a boarding house, had later acted as matron of the Ohio Deaf and Dumb Asylum and then as principal of the female department of the Columbus high school, had gone abroad in 1851 as a delegate to the World's Peace Congress, and all the while had been writing articles and stories for the newspapers and magazines on a variety of subjects.<sup>70</sup> Her special interests were temperance and woman's rights, though other social reforms also had her sympathies. While abroad she delivered a number of lectures in England on woman's rights, dress reform, temperance, physiology and other matters of special interest to women, and wrote articles for several western papers. Her marriage to Col. Samuel Cutler in 1852 was followed presently by their removal to

<sup>69</sup> *Cadiz Republican*, Nov. 14, 1860.

<sup>70</sup> *Cleveland Herald*, Mar. 17, 18, 1853, and the columns of the *Ohio Cultivator*.

Illinois. Mrs. Cutler continued to write for the *Ohio Cultivator* and other papers for some years and returned for an occasional lecture, but her influence as a reformer was less important than at the beginning of the decade. However, she returned to speak for the cause in 1861 and to see its first significant triumph. Her work in the post-war years is considered in a later paragraph.

Mrs. Gage, like Mrs. Cutler, of New England parentage, was the mother of eight children, yet she found time to write and lecture for the interests of her sex, for temperance and for the abolition of slavery as well as for other humanitarian reforms.<sup>71</sup> As the "Aunt Fanny" of the *Ohio Cultivator*, she was assiduous in preaching the gospel of discontent to the women on the farm. Though removing to St. Louis in 1853 with her husband and family, she continued her interest in her native State and made frequent trips back, besides writing poems and articles for the *Ohio Cultivator*, the *Ohio Farmer*, the *Ladies' Repository* and other papers. She returned to Ohio in 1860 to become associate editor of *Field Notes* and the *Ohio Cultivator*, both published by Col. S. D. Harris, but the Civil War ended both publications and Mrs. Gage went into the work of soldiers' relief. As a poet she enjoyed a widespread popularity with those who liked simple, homely themes and a swinging rhythm. Yet her interests were not in literature but in humanity. She was indefatigable in her efforts to promote the interests of her sex and to crush the liquor evil, and few of her contemporaries equalled her as a writer or public speaker.



11. MRS. FRANCES DANA GAGE.

<sup>71</sup> L. P. Brockett, *Woman's Work in the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1867), 683-90, and her letters to the *Ohio Cultivator*.



Both Mrs. Cutler and Mrs. Gage were standing refutations of the popular notion that female agitators were unbalanced freaks whose triumph would destroy the marriage bond and overthrow the Christian religion. That the domestic virtues could exist in advocates of woman's rights was clearly proven in their cases.

Among other well known figures in the movement were Mrs. J. Elizabeth Jones, Mrs. Caroline M. Severance, Mrs. Josephine S. Griffing, Mrs. E. R. Coe, Miss Betsy Cowles and Mrs. Amelia Bloomer, though the last named resided in Ohio too short a time to achieve the leadership that her reputation as an advocate of dress reform might have warranted. Sojourner Truth, an illiterate Negro woman, contributed a remarkable speech at the Akron convention of 1851. Mrs. Jones of Salem was the skilful organizer who led the forces to initial victory in the legislation of 1861.<sup>72</sup> Through conventions, lectures, the circulation of petitions and lobbying before the assembly, the work was carried to a reasonably successful conclusion, so far as the immediate aims of the reformers were concerned. It seemed eminently fitting that the last act of the drama should see the three women who had contributed most to the cause in Ohio appear to participate in the victory. Before a crowded senate chamber at a public committee hearing on their bill, the three veterans, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Cutler and Mrs. Gage, all mothers and two of them grandmothers, gave their messages to the assembled legislators and received assurances that their labors were not altogether in vain. The passage of the bill granting limited property rights to married women, referred to earlier, followed within a short time. Further efforts at reform were checked by the outbreak of the Civil War and it was left to another generation to carry on the work begun by the forgotten pioneers of the 1850's.

The impetus for the post-Civil War woman's rights movement seems to have come from outside the State. National leaders, inspired by the efforts to secure equal rights for the Negro, decided that the time was opportune to press the cause of sex equality.

<sup>72</sup> *History of Woman Suffrage*, I, 168-70.

The American Equal Rights Association appeared in 1866 to agitate for congressional action to enfranchise both women and Negroes. Petitions poured into Congress but even most friends of sex equality believed that this was the Negro's hour. The National Woman Suffrage Association was set up in 1869 with a "sixteenth amendment" to the United States Constitution as its great objective. In May, 1870, the Union Woman Suffrage Society temporarily took its place.<sup>73</sup>

In Ohio no State organization existed at first though occasional lecturers kept the issue alive. A local branch of the American Equal Rights Association was set up at Cincinnati in 1868 and was represented in the national convention.<sup>74</sup> In Cleveland, friendliest of Ohio cities to moral reform causes, the *Leader* reported that the largest audience ever to greet a public lecturer in that place heard a Dr. Holland talk to the Library Association on "The Woman Question," the speaker taking the "womanly and christian" side.<sup>75</sup> Anna Dickinson spoke to 1,600 persons, while Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton were well received in the same city.<sup>76</sup> In 1869 a Hamilton County member of the assembly introduced a resolution for a constitutional amendment to provide for woman suffrage, thereby bringing the discussion into legislative halls.<sup>77</sup> Ohio entered the national picture when an out-of-State group of woman's rights advocates called a national convention to meet at Cleveland in November, 1869, to form the American Woman Suffrage Association, which, it was hoped, would supplant the existing organizations and unify the movement. The *Leader* called it the "first national women's suffrage convention that ever assembled in the world."<sup>78</sup>

A State convention at Cincinnati in September elected Mrs. Hannah M. Tracy Cutler, now a resident of Cleveland, as presi-

<sup>73</sup> Ida H. Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* (Indianapolis, 1898), I, 259-61, 326 ff.

<sup>74</sup> *History of Woman Suffrage*, III, 491.

<sup>75</sup> Oct. 30, 1867.

<sup>76</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, Nov. 30, Dec. 17, 1867.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1869.

<sup>78</sup> Nov. 24, 1869.

dent, and was addressed by some of the national leaders.<sup>79</sup> In connection with the national meeting at Cleveland the Ohio delegates also staged a State convention with Mrs. Cutler in the chair and Lucy Stone a leading figure. The *Woman's Advocate* of Dayton was adopted as the State organ, though its span of life was brief. After a lapse of sixteen years Ohio suffrage leaders were again holding State conventions to advertise their cause. Several pioneers of the earlier meetings were present, including Mrs. Caroline M. Severance of Boston, formerly of Cleveland, who reminisced about the first conventions. The State meeting then merged with the national one and out-of-state speakers supplied much of the oratory. A New Englander, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, occupied the chair but Rev. Henry Ward Beecher of New York, who was not present, was made president of the new national association. Among the women in attendance were such well known personages as Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe, Rev. Antoinette Brown Blackwell and Susan B. Anthony. Twenty-one states were represented.<sup>80</sup>

The Ohio suffragists began to form county societies and another State convention met at Columbus in February, 1870, to put pressure upon the new General Assembly.<sup>81</sup> Mrs. Cutler was chairman and Lucy Stone, Mrs. M. M. Cole, Rebecca Rice and others spoke. The resolutions adopted advocated a broad program of educational, economic, legal and political equality for women and urged the legislature to abolish all distinctions as to sex in educational institutions incorporated by the State and in the compensations of teachers and State employees. Part of the sessions were held in the Senate chamber, though it was said that most of the legislators had gone home and were not influenced by the convention's work. A Dayton State meeting in April provided another rally for the reformers, and won some favorable notices from the press.<sup>82</sup> The *Dayton Journal* reported that Mrs. Cutler and Mrs. Livermore were "positively magnificent" in appearance and that the others all

<sup>79</sup> *History of Woman Suffrage*, III, 492.

<sup>80</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, Nov. 24, 25, 26, 1869.

<sup>81</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Feb. 11, 12, 1870.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 28, 29, 1870.

dressed well.<sup>83</sup> Mrs. Cutler, who spoke in Cincinnati in June, was described by the usually waspish *Commercial* as a remarkably fine-looking woman, tall, full-figured, dignified in carriage, richly dressed in black silk, and possessed of winning manners and graceful gestures.<sup>84</sup> The press, as the Cleveland *Leader* pointed out, had become far more respectful than in the past when sneers were the portion of the pioneers.<sup>85</sup>

The General Assembly proved obdurate, however. After receiving a number of petitions both for and against woman suffrage, and considering a resolution for a referendum of the women themselves, the house of representatives finally voted on a proposal to refer to the voters a State constitutional amendment that the right to vote should not be denied on account of sex. After an animated debate, the resolution was defeated, 52 to 54. The party division was as follows: yeas, 19 Republicans, 32 Democrats; nays, 33 Republicans, 21 Democrats.<sup>86</sup> The reform spirit shown by the Democrats was not as widespread as the vote seemed to indicate. One may suspect that some were more interested in embarrassing the Republicans by forcing them to commit themselves on the issue of sex political equality. Since the majority party had just brought about Negro suffrage by the Fifteenth Amendment, its equalitarian ideals were placed in a bad light by its evident hostility to votes for women. While not a party issue, it was apparent that the question had political implications. Next year, at the adjourned session of the assembly a suffrage proposal was rejected, 39 to 43, with 68 votes as the required number for its adoption.<sup>87</sup>

The movement seemed to lose momentum after these setbacks, though State conventions continued to be held and another national gathering assembled at Cleveland on November 22, 1870.<sup>88</sup> Ohio was honored when Mrs. Cutler was made the national president. The State was reported to have thirty-one auxiliary societies.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, May 2, 1870; Boston *Post* in *ibid.*, May 9, 1870.

<sup>84</sup> June 17, 1870.

<sup>85</sup> Nov. 30, 1869.

<sup>86</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Feb.-Mar., 1870.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 6, 1871.

<sup>88</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Nov. 23, 24, 1870.



A proposal was rejected by the national convention for a union with a New York group of a more radical character. Indeed, the antics of some of these, notably Mrs. Victoria Woodhull, who essayed to run for president in 1872, injured the feminist cause. Mrs. Woodhull attracted a large audience to her lecture in Cleveland in September, 1871, but the *Leader*, generally sympathetic toward the feminist cause, repudiated her and charged that her following was a free love coterie and a detriment to the whole movement.<sup>89</sup> The Ohio leaders held aloof from the radical element but their cause did not prosper. Years of agitation were required to shake the women themselves from their lethargy and indifference toward political action. The tide that had brought civil and political equality to the Negro had begun to ebb, and the feminist movement suffered accordingly.

The reforming spirit of the antebellum generation also revealed itself in a more enlightened attitude toward the criminal and a greater sense of social responsibility for the unfortunate. The old tradition of callous inhumanity toward adult law-breakers was still much in evidence, for the prisoners in the Ohio Penitentiary were regarded primarily as a source of revenue for the State.<sup>90</sup> Over forty shops inside the walls employed a thousand men under contract, returning a dividend to the State treasury. Contract labor, however, was beginning to be frowned upon, and though punishment rather than reformation was the dominant note as yet, new ideas were beginning to assert themselves.

This is most evident in the growing demand for a better treatment of youthful offenders, who were so often merely victims of an unfortunate environment. This feeling crystallized in the establishment of the State Reform Farm near Lancaster by act of the

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, Oct. 25, Nov. 18, 24, Dec. 7, 1871.

<sup>90</sup> The above accounts of the various State institutions, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from *Historical Sketches of the Higher Educational Institutions and also of Benevolent and Reformatory Institutions of the State of Ohio* (no place, 1876). The pages are not numbered. The State Centennial Educational Committee published it. See also Alfred E. Lee, *History of the City of Columbus* (New York, 1892), II, 578-619.

assembly, April 16, 1857.<sup>91</sup> This measure came upon the heels of the report of a special board of three commissioners, constituted earlier to investigate systems in use in other States for reforming youthful offenders.<sup>92</sup> Charles Reemelin, German-born member of the commission, made a trip to Europe in the summer of 1856 and took occasion to visit a number of European institutions of this character. The system at Mettray, France, where boys were grouped in "families" of forty on a state farm, particularly attracted him and it was along these lines that the commission made its recommendations, though visits to eastern institutions were also useful in determining certain features of the new system. The outcome was the passage of the Act of 1857 establishing a State farm for the reformation of youthful law violators whose incarceration in the penitentiary would in most cases lead to a career of crime. The experiment thus entered upon developed into one of the most valuable of the State's institutions of a humanitarian and reformatory character.

By this same law, houses of refuge were authorized, to be maintained by State, city and voluntary contributions. Cincinnati alone had such an institution (since 1851), and this was now to be permitted to receive State aid and to be open to youths from other parts of the State. No agreement could be reached with the city, however, and the house of refuge continued as before. Cleveland was the only other city to establish such an institution (1871). Both took care of juvenile offenders under a combined work-and-study plan.

Although planned in 1857-1858, the Girls Industrial Home did not materialize until 1869 when the State purchased the "White Sulphur Springs" on the west bank of the Scioto, about nine miles southwest of Delaware.<sup>93</sup> Within three years 153 girls were living at the home, at first in the old resort buildings until a bad fire in 1873 forced the construction of more substantial and better arranged structures.

<sup>91</sup> *Ohio Laws, Acts*, 52 Assemb., 2 Sess., LIV (1857), 171-7.

<sup>92</sup> *Ohio Executive Documents*, Part I, 1856, No. 16, pp. 615-34.

<sup>93</sup> Nelson L. Bossing, "The History of Educational Legislation in Ohio, 1851-1925," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XXXIX (1930), 295.

Even to the more hardened offenders the humanitarianism of the 1850's was willing to make concessions. In the penitentiary the rigidity of discipline was being modified by the abolition of the "lock step," "shower baths," and the use of the "cat," with solitary confinement as a less painful substitute for the latter two.<sup>94</sup> There was also a rather widespread sentiment favorable to the abolition of capital punishment. A bill to that effect passed the senate in 1850 but was defeated in the house by a vote of 31 to 23.<sup>95</sup> A similar proposal was debated in the Constitutional Convention of 1850-1851 and defeated by the rather close vote of 50 to 34.<sup>96</sup> Among the reasons for its defeat were the belief that such a proposal was legislative, not constitutional, in character, and the fear that its inclusion might create unnecessary antagonism to the new Constitution. The legislature on several occasions seriously considered the question, but this marked the extent of its progress. Newspaper support was not lacking for anti-capital punishment measures, even the influential Cincinnati *Commercial* pointing to the fact that there had not been an execution for murder in Cincinnati for many years as juries would not apply the extreme penalty.<sup>97</sup> Probably the failure of measures to abolish capital punishment was due rather to lack of interest and absence of organized sentiment for abolition than to any strong feeling for retaining the death penalty. Other reforms were more pressing.

In her provisions for the education of the blind and the deaf and dumb, and for the care of the insane, Ohio was well abreast of her sister states.<sup>98</sup> The Ohio Institution for the Deaf and Dumb had existed since 1827, but was growing at such a rate that its facilities became inadequate in the 1850's and new buildings had to be constructed in the next decade to accommodate 400 persons. The Institution for the Blind had begun its existence in 1837 and

<sup>94</sup> William T. Martin, *History of Franklin County* (Columbus, 1858), 360.

<sup>95</sup> Cleveland *Herald*, Mar. 23, 1850.

<sup>96</sup> Smith, *Debates and Proceedings*, I, 714; II, 34.

<sup>97</sup> Apr. 20, 1860. See also Cleveland *Leader*, Mar. 29, 1860; *Hocking Sentinel*, Jan. 26, 1854.

<sup>98</sup> E. E. White and Thomas W. Harvey, eds., *A History of Education in the State of Ohio* (Columbus, 1876), 396-9. See also footnote 90.

was in a flourishing condition. The first provision for the insane had been made in 1821, followed by the establishment of a State asylum for curable cases at Columbus in 1838. The first institution was located at Cincinnati and had been under joint State and local control. It was claimed in 1850 that only 400 out of 4,000 insane persons in Ohio were under State care at that time, the others being kept in their homes or in the county infirmaries. The latter places were entirely unfitted for such cases. As a consequence, during the 1850's two new insane asylums were created, located at Dayton and Cleveland, as well as an institution for "the education of idiotic and imbecile youth." The latter was established in 1857, with Dr. R. J. Patterson, who had worked to arouse public opinion on the problem, becoming the first superintendent. Permanent buildings were constructed and opened in 1868 under the superintendency of Dr. G. A. Doren. By 1871 the number of inmates had reached 170.<sup>99</sup>

Despite these improvements facilities were far from adequate to take care of all the State's mental cases. In 1870, 1,176 insane persons and 505 feeble-minded were confined in county infirmaries and jails.<sup>100</sup> The State asylum for the latter group did not admit those incapable of some degree of training. The institution for the insane at Columbus had been destroyed by fire in 1868 and was not rebuilt for several years, thus placing a greater strain upon the Dayton and Cleveland State asylums and upon Longview (Cincinnati), a county institution to which the State contributed funds. A new hospital for the insane of southeastern Ohio was being constructed at Athens but it was not completed until 1874.

Conditions in some of the county infirmaries, as revealed by investigations of the Board of State Charities in 1870-1871, were deplorable. In the Jefferson County poorhouse were 7 insane inmates, both men and women, confined in small, damp, evil-smelling cells and almost entirely without clothes. A trough running through the cells provided sewage facilities. In an adjoining yard, "one great

<sup>99</sup> Ohio Board of State Charities, *Annual Report, 1871* (Columbus, 1872), 73-4; Bossing, "Educational Legislation," 283-4.

<sup>100</sup> Board of State Charities, *Annual Report, 1870*, 10-11.



reservoir of filth," were other wretched creatures, one of them a woman, entirely naked except for a turban made of "filthy shreds of blankets." The building was, as a county commissioner put it, "only fit to be torn down." Two years earlier the secretary of the Board of State Charities had criticised these same conditions but local opinion had not been sufficiently aroused to demand improvement.<sup>101</sup>

Ross County was equally bad. A farmhouse, over fifty years old, was used to accommodate 78 inmates, including 23 children and 18 insane persons. The winter before 105 persons had lived in it. Each room had to serve as sleeping quarters for from six to nine persons. Those fortunate enough to have beds were "obliged to wage a constant warfare with veteran bedbugs who had seen fifty years of service, and their annual reinforcements of tens of thousands." Five of the insane were chained to the floor. Every year saw one or more illegitimate children born in this poorhouse where "helpless paupers, driveling idiots and raving lunatics" were thrown together. Meals were served in broken earthen bowls and battered tin washbasins. Despite exposure and criticism in the newspapers, county officials did nothing to improve conditions.<sup>102</sup> Both Jefferson and Ross were comparatively wealthy counties.

The secretary of the Board of State Charities attributed the miserable condition of some infirmaries to popular ignorance, "parsimonious, or mistaken ideas of economy" and partisan control.<sup>103</sup> Elected infirmary directors who received salaries of a few hundred dollars a year appointed a superintendent, at an equally low salary, whose chief purposes seemed to be to make the infirmary farm profitable with pauper labor and to see that the adult male inmates voted the party ticket. Humanitarian considerations were often forgotten. Yet conditions apparently had improved since State inspections began in 1868. In many counties, old buildings were modernized or new ones built and sanitary facilities more adequately provided for. Wayne County reported the construction of a waterworks system

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-4.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-7.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 1871, 10-11, 68-9.

with hot and cold water available at six different places in the building and three bath tubs installed for the use of the inmates. Hardin County, for \$50,000, built a new infirmary that was regarded as a model by Secretary Albert G. Byers of the Board of State Charities.<sup>104</sup>

County jails and city prisons were usually wretched places, many of them unfit for human habitation.<sup>105</sup> Damp, dirty, badly lighted, poorly ventilated, the air polluted with sewage odors, the average jail was a menace to health. Of seventy-eight reported upon to the Board of State Charities, sixty-two had no water except what was carried in. Only four had facilities for bathing, and in one case, this was a wash-tub. In forty-nine without outside drainage, sewage had to be carried out. Prisoners of all ages, sexes, conditions, and various degrees of criminality, those already convicted and those awaiting trial, were all confined together with little attempt at segregation. During 1870, eighty counties had in their jails 4,791 male prisoners, 421 female, 287 boys, 27 girls, 245 insane, and 13 epileptics. Cincinnati and Cleveland opened workhouses in 1870 and 1871, but other cities were slower in acting.

The establishment of orphan asylums and children's homes by city and county authorities was given legal sanction in 1866 and 1867.<sup>106</sup> With 1,003 children under fifteen years of age in infirmaries in 1870, such provision for their care was badly needed. Only two counties, Montgomery and Washington, took advantage of this legislation and established county children's homes at this time. The others depended upon private charity or continued the practice of placing orphans in county infirmaries. Some fifteen or sixteen children's homes were in existence in 1871 under denominational or private control and supported by private donations.<sup>107</sup> Nearly all were in or near the larger cities, Cincinnati having four of these homes. The State entered the picture in 1870 by creating the Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home, taking over an institution

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 1870, 59-61, 80; 1871, 66.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 1870, 91-100, 112-4.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-5; Bossing, "Educational Legislation," 285-7.

<sup>107</sup> Board of State Charities, *Annual Report*, 1871, 82-96, 114-5.

set up by the Grand Army of the Republic the year before. Greene County citizens and others donated money for the land and buildings. The home was located near Xenia.<sup>108</sup>

Private charity also supplied a variety of institutions for the relief of the destitute and the unfortunate, nearly all established between 1850 and 1870. Homes for the friendless, "retreats," charity hospitals, "bethels," "relief unions," and similar institutions were doing much to alleviate poverty and suffering in the cities.<sup>109</sup> The Woman's Christian Associations at Cleveland and Cincinnati maintained homes for working women who were offered board and room at modest prices. Through its religious and recreational work the Young Men's Christian Association was also making its influence felt, with the religious aspect its primary consideration.

The role of the State in supervising charitable and correctional institutions was strengthened by the creation of a Board of State Charities in 1867. Only Massachusetts had taken such a step when the Ohio law was passed. Representative D. A. Dangler of Cuyahoga County sponsored the measure in the belief that some central body was needed to investigate and coordinate their activities and make suggestions for improvement. It had the backing of the State medical association and the support of Governor Cox. The brief act creating the board gave it authority to investigate "the whole system of the public charitable and correctional institutions" and to recommend changes.<sup>110</sup> The five members received no compensation, though they could employ a secretary and other officers. The board was abolished in 1872 but was restored four years later.

The secretary, Rev. Albert G. Byers, took his duties very seriously and wrote some excellent reports describing conditions in State and county institutions. While lacking authority to do more than expose evils and suggest improvements, the board was an important influence for reform. County officials did not like to see their infirmaries and jails described in print as "dilapidated," "filthy,"

<sup>108</sup> *Sketches of Ohio Educational Institutions* (see footnote 90).

<sup>109</sup> Board of State Charities, *Annual Report, 1871*, 97-103; D. J. Kenny, *Illustrated Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, 1875), 46-61.

<sup>110</sup> Board of State Charities, *Annual Report, 1870*, 3. The author is indebted to Alfred G. Harris, graduate assistant in history at Ohio State University, for information on the origins and work of the board.



"swarming with vermin," and managed with "sheer want of intelligence." Often local opinion demanded a housecleaning and the suggestions of the secretary of the State board were carried out. The board prepared plans for a model infirmary, and county commissioners sometimes brought their building problems to the secretary for advice and assistance.

In 1870, the board presented a general plan for the treatment of criminals by the State that included the most advanced contemporary ideas. It may be summarized as follows: 1. The penitentiary to be used only for the more hardened criminals. 2. A "house of discipline," or intermediate prison, to be created for those for whom there seemed to be some hope of reformation. 3. County workhouses, confined at first to the larger counties, to be established for persons convicted of minor offenses. 4. Jails to be used only as places of detention for those awaiting trial with each inmate given a separate cell. 5. The reform schools for boys and girls to be improved and enlarged.<sup>111</sup> In addition, the board recommended the granting of conditional pardons to criminals in some cases and the use of the indeterminate sentence, thus making the length of term of imprisonment dependent on the behavior of the individual. As to the charitable institutions, the board worked for an expansion of facilities for the care of the insane by the State, the transfer of children from county infirmaries to children's homes, the removal of all mental defectives from infirmaries to State institutions, and the establishment by the State of an asylum for epileptics.<sup>112</sup> These enlightened policies required many years of effort before they could be carried into execution.

While most reformers found their energies absorbed by domestic questions, a few displayed an interest in the crusade against war. The movement for world peace, though appearing sporadically in Ohio as early as 1815 in the form of local societies, did not become really active in an organized form until 1850.<sup>113</sup> In that year, under the impulse of the national society, a State organization was launched. Elihu Burritt, father of the movement, came to Ohio and

<sup>111</sup> Board of State Charities, *Annual Report*, 1870, 22-3.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-13.

<sup>113</sup> Merle Curti, *The American Peace Crusade* (Durham, N. C., 1929), 12-3, 31-2.



addressed peace meetings in different localities, culminating in a State convention at Columbus on May 18.<sup>114</sup> Delegates were chosen to the World's Peace Convention at Frankfort, Germany, and the friends of peace in the different congressional districts were urged to take similar action. Both the temporary chairman, Rev. John Rankin of Ripley, and the secretary, L. L. Rice of Columbus, were well known figures in the antislavery movement while the permanent chairman, William Dawes, came from Oberlin. John C. Vaughan, Samuel Lewis, Samuel Galloway and Bellamy Storer were among the better known citizens who participated in the meeting. The latter two were not antislavery radicals but the convention, nevertheless, had a strong antislavery cast.

In February, 1851, the Ohio State Peace Society, thus organized, held a convention at Columbus and appointed delegates to the next international convention, to be held at London. Joshua R. Giddings, Samuel S. Cox and Rev. John Rankin were the best known of the delegates chosen.<sup>115</sup> This time, unlike the preceding year, some of the accredited delegates were able to attend, though most of them never left their native land.<sup>116</sup> After this the movement seems to have expired and there is no further evidence of any activity by the State society.

The appearance of an earnest group of peace enthusiasts, interested in such a remote problem of an international character as world peace, is symptomatic of the democratic idealism of the age. That it expired so speedily is not surprising when one considers the greater appeal of reforms nearer home. Land for the landless, freedom for the African, the destruction of the liquor evil, the emancipation of women and the alleviation of poverty and crime were far more pressing and far more practical. That any consideration should have been given to the peace movement at all is the best indication of the strength of the reforming spirit.

<sup>114</sup> *Cincinnati Gazette*, Apr. 16, 18, 1850; *Cleveland Herald*, May 6, 27, June 18, 1850.

<sup>115</sup> *Ohio Cultivator*, VII (Apr. 1, 1851), 109-10.

<sup>116</sup> Mr. and Mrs. M. B. Bateham of the *Ohio Cultivator* and Mrs. Hannah M. Tracy went abroad to visit the world's fair at the Crystal Palace, London. Mrs. Bateham's presence at the peace congress caused objections to be raised to women as delegates. Curti, *American Peace Crusade*, 186. Samuel S. Cox was in Europe but apparently did not attend the congress.

# The End of the Old Political Order

## 1850-1853

WHEN Zachary Taylor died in the White House on July 9, 1850, the Whigs of Ohio suffered a major disaster. In 1849-50, they had been torn between support of the Wilmot Proviso to keep slavery out of the territories and loyalty to a national administration headed by a slaveholder with all the spoils of office at its disposal. The problem of 1848 was still unsettled.<sup>1</sup> How could the revolting antislavery Whigs be convinced that the new administration was not under southern domination? The burden of proof was clearly with the friends of the Taylor administration. Then, early in 1850, Henry Clay introduced his compromise proposals. At once they aroused widespread disapproval. There could be no hope of winning back the deserters of 1848 on such a program. A public meeting of Whigs at Columbus, attended by many legislators, denounced the plan of Clay and took a pronounced antislavery position, while William Dennison, Whig leader, brought up resolutions of a similar character in the assembly.<sup>2</sup> There were conservatives who objected to such a positive expression of opinion,<sup>3</sup> but the three leading Whig newspapers agreed that Clay's position was not that of Ohio Whiggery. "New compromises, in this region, are not looked upon with favor," declared the usually conservative *Cincinnati Gazette*.<sup>4</sup>

But hostility to compromise did not mean hostility to the national administration. It was soon evident that Clay was not speak-

<sup>1</sup> See Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850*, Carl Wittke, ed., *History of the State of Ohio*, III (1941), Chap. XVI.

<sup>2</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 5, 1850; *Ohio Statesman*, Feb. 1, 2, 1850.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 5; *Steubenville Herald* in *Ohio Statesman*, Feb. 11; *Toledo Blade* *ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1850.

<sup>4</sup> Jan. 31, 1850; *Ohio State Journal*, Jan. 31, 1850; *Cleveland Herald*, Jan. 30, 1850.

ing for the President and that the latter was holding to his position that California should be admitted as a free state, as its people desired, without any other condition attached. The Whig State convention of May 6 expressed confidence in the President's policy and also reiterated its opposition to the extension of slavery into any new territories, attempting to combine loyalty to the administration with its creed of 1848.<sup>5</sup> It chose as its candidate for governor, Judge William F. Johnston of Cincinnati, turning down for renomination Governor Seabury Ford, who was regarded as a more pronounced antislavery man but who came from the Western Reserve. The platform was made for northern Ohio, the candidate must come from the south. The favorable reaction to the administration's California policy and the news that New Mexico was organizing as a free state with the President's approval greatly heartened Ohio Whigs. No longer were they inclined to insist on the Wilmot Proviso if the same ends could be secured by the President's plan. No longer could the accusation be made that the national administration was proslavery. It seemed that the Whig party in Ohio was in a fair way to recover the ground lost by the Free Soil defection of 1848.

This promising prospect was suddenly clouded by the death of President Taylor. Would the new President uphold the policy of his predecessor or support Clay's Compromise, which was so unpopular in Ohio? The fate of Ohio Whiggery teetered in the balance. The *Ohio State Journal* expressed its confidence that President Millard Fillmore would not go over to the enemy,<sup>6</sup> while the gubernatorial candidate wrote in alarm to Secretary of the Treasury Thomas Corwin that any change in Taylor's policy would be fatal in Ohio.<sup>7</sup> Corwin's appointment to the Treasury Department was at first a ray of hope. The lustre of his anti-war course in 1847 had been greatly dimmed by his support of Taylor in the campaign of 1848 but he still retained the confidence of most anti-

<sup>5</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, May 6, 7, 1850.

<sup>6</sup> July 12, 16, 1850.

<sup>7</sup> William F. Johnston to Thomas Corwin, July 24, 1850, Corwin MSS. (Library of Congress).

slavery Whigs, and while silent on Clay's Compromise, was known to be opposed to it. But Corwin was at heart a conservative. In accepting the treasury portfolio from President Fillmore he tacitly acquiesced in the new administration's policy and cast his future with "silver gray" Whiggery. No hint of opposition to the Compromise came from him. The presence of Webster in the new cabinet was far more indicative of Fillmore's intentions. One by one the Compromise measures were taken up by Congress and passed with the President's approval. All that the organs of Whiggery in Ohio could do was to acquiesce and urge that the Compromise was apparently the only solution.<sup>8</sup> Unless they accepted it, the party was wrecked, for it dared not repudiate its national administration. Yet acceptance closed the door to reconciliation with the Free Soilers. Attempts were made to throw the blame for the new Fugitive Slave Act upon the Democrats, but this was a weak defense. The chief hope of the Whigs lay in the use of local issues, such as the banking and currency question, as a smoke screen to cover their about-face on the Compromise.

The Democrats had held their convention before the introduction of the Clay resolutions and had dodged the slavery issue.<sup>9</sup> Their platform repeated the pleasantly indefinite antislavery resolution of 1848, and though the delegates voted down an indorsement of the Wilmot Proviso, they named a candidate for governor, Judge Reuben Wood, who came from the Western Reserve and was reputed to hold antislavery views. Only radicals of the Salmon P. Chase stamp, hovering between the Democracy and the third party, were disgruntled. They had hoped to transform the bargain of 1849<sup>10</sup> into a permanent alliance, but the rejection of the Proviso was a direct slap in the face. Judge Wood tried to conciliate them by a private message to Chase, and by taking a more positive antislavery position in his only public utterance of the campaign.<sup>11</sup> He

<sup>8</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Sept. 20, 30, 1850; *Cincinnati Gazette*, Sept. 8, 9, 16, 1850.

<sup>9</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Jan. 12, 1850; *Ohio Statesman*, Jan. 8, 9, 10, 1850.

<sup>10</sup> Weisenburger, *Passing of the Frontier*, 470 ff.

<sup>11</sup> B. B. Chapman to Chase, Mar. 6, 1850, Chase MSS. (Library of Congress); *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, in *Ohio Statesman*, Apr. 20, 1850.



did not succeed with Chase but did in the end have the support of some of the latter's most trusted friends of Democratic Free Soil persuasion, such as Charles R. Miller of Toledo, Norton S. Townshend of Lorain and James W. Taylor of Sandusky.

The party did not commit itself on Clay's Compromise measures. A second State convention in July, called to name a candidate for the Board of Public Works (recently made elective), declared for the admission of California and New Mexico with their recently adopted constitutions and went no further.<sup>12</sup> This virtual indorsement of the Whig President's policy was their plank for the campaign. Without a national administration to defend, the Democrats could throw on the Whigs the onus of the Compromise measures and conceal the divisions in their own ranks by letting each locality define its own position. When two Democratic members of Congress voted for the Fugitive Slave Act, they expressed their own opinions, not those of the party.<sup>13</sup> Stressing the currency question and charges of corruption in the national administration, and avoiding the slavery issue, the Democrats, by a policy of calculated evasion, came to the close of the State campaign without mishap and with their forces intact.

The Free Soilers, with the enthusiasm of 1848 evaporated, had much ado to hold their organization together. A thinly attended convention in May named Daniel R. Tilden of Summit County for governor over John F. Beaver, a Whig Free Soil member of the General Assembly who favored an alliance with the Whigs.<sup>14</sup> This victory for the independent element was soon rendered null by Tilden's withdrawal from the race, leaving the party without a candidate until late in the summer. The leading party organ, the *Cleveland True Democrat*, was looking hopefully toward the Whigs,<sup>15</sup> while Salmon P. Chase was still considering an alliance

<sup>12</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, July 5, 1850.

<sup>13</sup> Four were absent. One Whig, John L. Taylor of Chillicothe, voted for the bill. No votes were cast against the California Bill or the prohibition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia. Four Democrats and one Whig from Ohio voted for the Texas-New Mexico Bill and three Democrats for the Utah Bill.

<sup>14</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, May 2, 3, 1850.

<sup>15</sup> *True Democrat*, July, August, 1850.

with the Democrats, if not for the governorship, then for legislative candidates.<sup>16</sup> However, late in August, a mass convention of the faithful met at Cleveland and nominated for governor, Rev. Edward Smith, a Liberty party veteran, thus throwing down the gauntlet to both the old parties.<sup>17</sup> The *True Democrat* remained loyal, Chase at least neutral, and the Compromise measures, especially the Fugitive Slave Act, supplied the issues. Thus the anti-slavery party weathered its crisis and no longer feared absorption by the old parties. Its existence, if not its success, seemed assured. The death of Taylor and the change of policy by Fillmore had given new strength to the party of the radicals and had doomed the Whigs to defeat.

The election of Wood by a plurality of less than 12,000 did not seem to herald the end of the Whig party in Ohio. The successful Democrat was short of a majority, and the assembly remained divided, as in the two preceding years, with the third party wielding the balance of power.<sup>18</sup> But the election ended a succession of Whig gubernatorial victories, begun in 1844, and seemed to insure the permanence of a third party whose very existence in Ohio was almost an assurance of Whig defeat. Both on economic questions and on slavery the party of Corwin and Ewing was running counter to the popular trend in the State. The prospects for future success were not very bright.

Reuben Wood, the first Democratic governor since Thomas W. Bartley, was a Vermonter by birth who had come to Cleveland in 1818 at the age of twenty-six, the third lawyer in that village of six hundred inhabitants.<sup>19</sup> He served in the State senate from 1825 to 1830, and then was successively common pleas judge and member of the Ohio Supreme Court, holding the latter office from

<sup>16</sup> Chase to E. S. Hamlin, Aug. 12, 22, 1850, American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1902 (Washington, 1903), II, 216-9.

<sup>17</sup> Cleveland *True Democrat*, Aug. 23, 24, 1850.

<sup>18</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Oct. 12, 15, Nov. 9, 1850. The Congressional elections gave the Democrats nine members of the House, the Whigs eight, the Free Soilers two, while Townshend in the 21st district was elected by a Democratic-Free Soil coalition, and Johnson in the 16th as an independent Democrat with Whig support. One of the two Free Soilers had Whig indorsement.

<sup>19</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, XX (1936), 470.

1833 to 1847. His tall, lean frame had gained him the name of "tall chief of the Cuyahogas." Wood was a moderate on banking and currency issues, held antislavery views, was not a narrow partisan and his inaugural won praise in Whig quarters.

With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 there was aroused a wave of criticism in Ohio which was not confined to radicals. Both the great parties repudiated it, and but one congressional district seemed inclined to support it. The lower Scioto Valley, center of the older Virginia traditions and peopled largely from the South, reelected a Congressman who had voted for the law. But this was in sharp contrast to the general trend. In the Reserve region public meetings stirred up a degree of excitement that threatened violence to any slave catcher who dared enter that New England precinct.<sup>20</sup> Nullification of the hated law was regarded as both an honorable and a meritorious act for all good citizens. But this produced a reaction in other parts of the State where public opinion was already moving in the direction of reluctant acquiescence in the Compromise. The *Ohio State Journal* and the *Cincinnati Gazette* for the Whigs, and the *Ohio Statesman* for the Democrats were presently urging this course.<sup>21</sup> Public meetings at Dayton and Cincinnati praised the great Compromise and urged its acceptance in good faith. Both Governor Seabury Ford in his final message and Governor Wood in his inaugural criticised the Fugitive Law and hoped that it would be modified or repealed but neither sanctioned nullification. The legislature took a similar position, and with this the matter slipped quietly into the background to the relief of the politicians of both major parties.<sup>22</sup>

The Assembly of 1850-1851, the last under the old Constitution, had as its chief political task the election of a United States Senator to take the place of Thomas Ewing, who was himself completing Corwin's unexpired term by appointment of Governor Ford. Again

<sup>20</sup> Jefferson (O.) *Ashtabula Sentinel*, Sept.-Nov., 1850; Cleveland *Herald*, Oct., 1850.

<sup>21</sup> See issues for October and November, 1850.

<sup>22</sup> The General Assembly passed resolutions criticising the law and recommending its modification or repeal, but there was no suggestion of nullification. *Ohio Laws, Acts* (local), XLIX (1850-1851), 814.

the Free Soilers seemed to hold the whip hand. No Whig or Democrat could be chosen without their aid. The concentration of the Free Soil vote in the Western Reserve gave the third party a power in the assembly out of all proportion to its numerical strength in the State. Rumors of intrigues and bargainings, as in 1849, marked the opening of the session and it seemed that history might repeat itself, for a Democratic-Free Soil coalition chose John F. Morse, one of the two "independents" of 1849, as speaker of the lower house. Chase, eager for a senatorial colleague of the same stamp as himself, was elated at this result, but his hopes were thwarted in the upper house when the two Free Soil senators helped elect a liberal Whig as speaker.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, conservative Democrats, fearing that Morse's election might mean another coalition of their party with antislavery radicals, denounced the arrangement in unmeasured terms and attacked Samuel Medary and the *Statesman* for countenancing it. Behind the attack was former Senator William Allen, victim of the coalition of 1849, whose organ, the *Chillicothe Advertiser*, led the chorus of denunciation. Some half dozen influential Democratic papers joined in the hue and cry against bargaining with abolitionists and effectually destroyed any possibilities of further cooperation with the third party.<sup>24</sup> Henry B. Payne, named by the Democratic caucus as the party's choice for the United States Senate, offered no attractions for the Free Soilers.

The senatorship in the end fell to an antislavery Whig. The caucus nominee of the party, Hiram Griswold of Stark County, did not appeal to the Free Soil members, who persisted in supporting the veteran, Joshua R. Giddings, an even more impossible choice for the Whigs. Ewing had been passed over by his party because of his personal unpopularity and because of a reputation for "hunkerism" on the slavery issue, though his votes on the Compromise measures paralleled Chase's. After several ineffectual ballots the matter was postponed until late in the session. Free Soil senti-

<sup>23</sup> James Myers to Chase, Dec. 7, 1850; Chase to E. S. Hamlin, Dec. 9, 1850, Chase MSS. (Library of Congress).

<sup>24</sup> Several Democratic newspapers were quoted in the *Ohio State Journal*, Dec. 7, 13, 16, 20, 1850.



ment was divided between the Chase-Hamlin group, eager for an entente with the Democrats, and the element of former Whigs, such as John C. Vaughan, Edward Wade, Thomas Brown and State Senator Randall, backed by the Cleveland *True Democrat*, who naturally leaned toward an alliance with the Whigs. When the senatorship balloting was resumed, Whigs and Free Soilers each offered a number of candidates for the other's approval without success until Judge Benjamin F. Wade was suggested. On the 29th ballot 44 out of 85 votes were cast for him and he was chosen.<sup>25</sup>

Wade was almost the only prominent candidate who suited both parties. His loyalty to Taylor in 1848 was a guaranty of his Whiggery while his residence in the Reserve and his violent attacks on the Fugitive Law satisfied the Free Soilers as to his antislavery radicalism. Both parties claimed him as of their faith and an amusing controversy resulted. Oran Follett expressed the general sentiment of conservatives when he wrote that Wade "used to be a good Whig" but he lived in "a very suspicious neighborhood."<sup>26</sup> Wade was really an excellent choice from both angles, for he was both Whig and antislavery zealot. To the end of his long career his course combined in equal measure violent partisanship and unswerving hatred toward the institution of slavery and its defenders.

The year 1851 saw another State election as the new Constitution, adopted in that year, fixed the date of the choice of most State officials for odd numbered years. The major parties avoided the slavery issue and the troublesome question of the Compromise, the Democrats by reaffirming the ambiguous antislavery resolution of the 1848 and 1850 platforms, the Whigs by according "perfect toleration of opinion" on the Compromise measures to Whigs everywhere.<sup>27</sup> Governor Wood was renominated by the Democrats, while the Whigs selected one of the party's wheelhorses, Samuel F. Vinton, whose congressional career had extended over a quarter of

<sup>25</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Mar. 17, 1851; *Ashtabula Sentinel*, Mar. 22, 1851.

<sup>26</sup> Follett to Corwin, Mar. 19, 1851, Corwin MSS. (Library of Congress). Giddings wrote to Chase that Wade's "past vacillation leads us to fear for the future." Letter of Apr. 3, 1851, Chase MSS. (Pennsylvania Historical Society).

<sup>27</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Aug. 7, 1851; *Ohio State Journal*, July 4, 5, Aug. 7, 1851.

a century. Vinton's residence in southern Ohio, his close relations with Thomas Ewing, whose business partner he was, and certain votes on slavery matters in Congress made him a doubtful choice for the antislavery element, while the "hunkers," or conservatives, were inclined to regard several of the nominees on the ticket as leaning toward abolitionist "higher law" notions.<sup>28</sup> Governor Wood, on the other hand, had the united support of his party and the advantages accruing from Democratic success in securing the adoption of the new Constitution.

The third party, now known as the "Free Democrats," seemed at first in a better position than in 1850. Preliminary conventions at Painesville and Ravenna stirred up considerable enthusiasm and the party prepared to capitalize on its hostility to the Compromise in the face of the old parties' evasions. Samuel Lewis was nominated for governor at the State convention, and except for the supreme judgeships, a complete State ticket was placed in the field despite efforts of a minority to secure indorsements of part of the Whig ticket.<sup>29</sup> But the party's prospects were blasted by the desertion of Senator Chase.

Chase's change of front might have been expected from his political maneuvering since 1849. Obsessed with the idea of converting the Democratic party into an antislavery organization, he had entered into an active correspondence with leading Democrats and eagerly adopted the party's radical principles on economic questions. Seeing the consistency of such a program with his antislavery principles, he urged his followers to stand "not for *mere freesoilism* but for free democracy, for the whole glorious family of free principles, in land, currency, trade and men."<sup>30</sup> At every opportunity he had cooperated with the Democrats and had come to regard the third party as a kind of adjunct of the Democracy, differing from it only in its insistence on the acceptance of a more radical anti-

<sup>28</sup> *Ashtabula Sentinel*, July-October, 1851; Oran Follett to Corwin, July 12, 1851, Corwin MSS. (Library of Congress).

<sup>29</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 23, 1851; Theodore Clark Smith, *Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest* (New York, 1897), 238.

<sup>30</sup> Chase to (Milton?) Sutliff, Dec. 20, 1850, *Am. Hist. Assoc., Report, 1902*, II, 225.

slavery creed. This explains his frequent use of the term "Free" and "Old Line" Democracy. Nevertheless, he seemingly approved of the third party's independent course until the late summer of 1851 when he wrote to his Toledo lieutenant, Charles R. Miller, avowing his intention to support the Democratic State ticket.<sup>31</sup>

In the Miller letter he quoted liberally from the resolutions of northern Ohio Democratic local conventions and from the messages of Governor Wood to prove to his own satisfaction that Ohio Democrats were antislavery. He also recognized the importance of State issues and expressed his thorough approval of the whole radical creed. Yet he seemed to forget that the Democratic party had not in Ohio taken as pronounced an antislavery position as the Whigs in past campaigns and that even then it was evading the Compromise issue. If he had lifted his eyes beyond the confines of his home State, he might have discovered that the backbone of opposition to the finality of the Compromise was the Whig following of Senator William H. Seward in New York and former Governor William F. Johnston in Pennsylvania, and not in the ranks of the Democrats. Only when Ohio Democrats had felt disgruntled over the defeat of Lewis Cass for the presidency by southern votes in 1848 had there been any tendency to assume an antislavery position, and this irritation had soon evaporated. Chase's own election to the Senate was the result of a peculiar combination of factors that would not occur again. In fact, one is tempted to conclude that the unexpressed but real cause of his conversion to Democracy in 1851 was concern for his political future rather than regard for his past principles. Chase as a Democrat stood a better chance of re-election than Chase as a Free Soiler.

The election of 1851, even more than that of 1850, turned on State issues,<sup>32</sup> slavery remaining as a disturbing but not dominant factor. The Whigs suffered a disastrous defeat, Vinton receiving

<sup>31</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Oct. 2, 1851.

<sup>32</sup> The banking question is treated in Chapter V. Vinton was assailed by the Democrats as hostile to the new Constitution, while Henry Stanbery, Whig nominee for attorney-general, was accused of speculation in soldiers' bounty lands,

but 119,596 votes to Wood's 145,604.<sup>33</sup> Lewis, Free Democrat, had 16,914. All the State offices went to the Democrats, who also controlled both branches of the assembly by large majorities. The third party consoled itself over its increased vote over 1850 but for the Whigs there was not a redeeming feature. Ground between the millstones of slavery and Locofocoism the party seemed wrecked. Yet there were many who believed that the right presidential candidate in 1852 might revive it.

One new movement flared up in the winter of 1851-1852 when the great Hungarian patriot and exile, Louis Kossuth, visited the West. Royally received by governor and legislature in February, he found the newspapers already debating the merits of an interventionist and an isolationist position toward the revolutionary movements in Europe.<sup>34</sup> Radical Democrats, of the "Young America" school, believed in an active policy of aiding the oppressed nationalities against their rulers, the Democratic State convention declaring it a national duty to assist them by any means in this country's power, "even to encounter the shock of arms on the battle field." It solemnly warned Russia that further intervention in Hungary "would not be regarded indifferently by the people of the United States," and laid down the doctrine of collective security in a ringing statement that the law of nations was in the keeping of nations, and that a breach of it was an offense against all nations.<sup>35</sup> The Cincinnati *Nonpareil* would send "a few regiments to Europe" to "work wonders" there.<sup>36</sup> The Free Democratic (or Free Soil) State convention also favored intervention "to prevent the aggressions of despotism."<sup>37</sup>

The Whigs, more conservative and impelled to support the cautious foreign policy of President Fillmore, were anti-interventionist,

<sup>33</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 20, 1851.

<sup>34</sup> See *Ohio State Journal* and *Ohio Statesman*, January-February, 1852, and the Cincinnati *Nonpareil*, November, 1851, to May, 1852. See also Charles Reemelin to Chase, Dec. 14, 1851, and G. W. McCook to Chase, Dec. 22, 1851, Chase MSS. (Library of Congress).

<sup>35</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Jan. 9, 1852.

<sup>36</sup> Nov. 10, 1851.

<sup>37</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 12, 1852.



though friendly to Kossuth. Their State convention ignored the issue.

With the departure of Kossuth the excitement subsided and the intervention question played but a slight part in the campaign of 1852. Exuberant Democracy was ready to throw isolation overboard, but the trend of events in Europe offered small hope of successful American interposition at that time.

Of the three parties in Ohio, only the Democratic had difficulty in making its presidential choice. The three leading contenders for Ohio's favor were Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan, Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois and former Senator William Allen of Ohio. The first named was the choice of the conservatives and "old fogies," Douglas of the "Young America" element, holding to interventionist ideas, while Allen was the "favorite son" candidate with the additional advantage of support from opponents of the Compromise of 1850. The Douglas movement, dating from a visit of that candidate to the State Fair in the fall of 1851, at first made the most headway, causing a "Douglas fever" in several localities.<sup>38</sup> It had the powerful backing of Colonel Samuel Medary, though the exigencies of politics compelled him to keep the *Ohio Statesman* neutral. Then Allen's candidacy was launched. At first it was regarded as a ruse to injure Douglas, but presently became so formidable that the friends of the other candidates united to check it. Allen's chief support came from the same element that had attacked Medary and the attempted Democratic-Free Soil coalition in the legislature in the winter of 1850-1851.

The Democratic State convention of January 8 was the scene of a bitter struggle.<sup>39</sup> The Allen delegates attempted to secure the convention's indorsement of their favorite and seemed about to succeed when the opposition joined forces and put through a substitute that it was inexpedient to indorse anyone. The Allen candidates for delegates-at-large to the national convention were also defeated

<sup>38</sup> Isaac Butts to William L. Marcy, Nov. 25, 1851; W. W. Snow to Marcy, Dec. 12, 1851, Marcy MSS. (Library of Congress).

<sup>39</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Jan. 9, 10, 1852.

by a close vote. It came to light in the course of the struggle that the close friends of Chase were aligned with the most extreme "hunkers," such as John K. Miller, a Fugitive Slave Law congressman, in support of Allen. Medary, who had borne the brunt of the criticisms of the Allen men for the coalition of 1849 that had elected Chase to Allen's seat in the Senate, naturally felt resentful at Chase's attitude. But rumor had it that the senator was only seeking to eliminate the ex-senator as a possible future rival for his position.<sup>40</sup>

The struggle in the convention started a factional war of such bitterness that it threatened to disrupt the party on the eve of the presidential campaign. The ostensible cause was the granting of the house printing to Medary on his own terms without competitive bidding, as the new Constitution had provided. Actually the anti-Medary flare-up was an effort by his enemies in the party to crush the veteran editor, using the printing question as a convenient pretext. The animus of the Allen faction was clearly behind the attack. Old factional divisions had been accentuated by the struggle in the State convention and the Whigs were edified at the spectacle of the editors of the two leading Democratic newspapers, the *Ohio Statesman* and the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, hurling epithets at each other with the rest of the Democratic press more or less involved in the fray.<sup>41</sup> It was currently reported that a new State organ would be established at Columbus to crush the *Statesman*, but nothing came of this and the internecine warfare temporarily ended when the national convention nominated Franklin Pierce.

Ohio's role in the Democratic national convention was not a prominent one. The factional struggles in the State prevented a united support for any one candidate and lessened the influence of the delegation. Allen's name was not even presented, most of his supporters favoring Cass, who received 16 of the State's 23 votes on the first ballot.<sup>42</sup> When the long deadlock in the convention was

<sup>40</sup> J. H. Smith to Chase, Feb. 21, 1852, Chase MSS. (Library of Congress).

<sup>41</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Jan.-Feb., 1852, carried extracts from anti-Medary Democratic papers. The *Statesman* defended Medary (Feb.-May, 1852).

<sup>42</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, June 3, 1852.

broken by the nomination of Franklin Pierce, the Ohio Democracy was much better satisfied than if some more prominent personage had been chosen. Pierce was almost unknown in the State, and hence an admirable choice from the point of view of party harmony. Factionalism seemed to have disappeared when the campaign began.

The Whigs, unlike their opponents, were not distracted by internecine troubles. The "higher law" and "lower law" elements regarded each other with some suspicion but there was no disagreement over a presidential candidate. As early as March, 1851, Judge Johnston was writing to Corwin that "Scott is a passion in Ohio," and that he would reclaim the State. "Without him God knows what we can do, perhaps nothing."<sup>43</sup> The opinion of almost every unbiased observer concurred in this sentiment. At first sight this seems hard to understand. Why should General Winfield Scott have been so popular with Ohio Whigs who knew of him only as a successful general in a war that most of them had opposed? The only explanation is his availability. Scott was not contaminated by the Compromise, had expressed no damaging opinions on the mooted question, and was generally backed by antislavery Whigs. If anyone could conciliate the Free Soilers, he was the man. Webster was anathema to them and Fillmore scarcely less so. "We can rally on a man pledged to *let the compromise alone*, but not for one who figured in the enactment of the Fugitive Law," wrote one observer from a section of the State where "free soil" had but a feeble hold.<sup>44</sup> This expresses well the position of Ohio Whiggery.

Scott was declared the official choice of the party at its State convention of July, 1851,<sup>45</sup> and the delegates to the national convention, with one exception, cast their votes accordingly. The lone dissenter was Seneca W. Ely, editor of the *Scioto Gazette* and a staunch friend of the Fillmore administration. He represented the lower Scioto Valley district, the most conservative section on slavery of the entire State. Ely voted consistently for Fillmore at the national

<sup>43</sup> William Johnston to Corwin, Mar. 2, 1851, Corwin MSS. (Library of Congress).

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Medill to Corwin, Nov. 15, 1851, *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, July 4, 1851.

convention until the final ballots when he threw his support to Scott to help end the deadlock.<sup>46</sup>

The news of Scott's nomination was received among Ohio Whigs with general rejoicing, but not so the platform. On the question of its adoption, fifteen of the twenty-three Ohio delegates had expressed their dissent. The resolution indorsing the finality of the Compromise of 1850 was the object of their hostility. The Whig press in Ohio generally regarded this action of the convention as a mistake. The Whig State convention, meeting in July to name candidates for the supreme court, the Board of Public Works and presidential electors, issued no statement of principles other than brief resolutions indorsing Scott and Graham and attacking the Democratic State administration.<sup>47</sup> Silence seemed the best policy toward the obnoxious Compromise plank.

The Free Soil party, undisturbed by presidential struggles or embarrassing issues, held its State convention in February and indorsed John P. Hale of New Hampshire and Samuel Lewis of Ohio as its choices for president and vice-president respectively.<sup>48</sup> But this was not meant to close the door to a fusion with Whigs or Democrats if either adopted antislavery principles. The *Ashtabula Sentinel*, organ of Joshua R. Giddings, spoke favorably of Scott before the Whig convention met and declared that if he came out for freedom the Free Soilers would support him. Only the Compromise, it said, served to divide parties.<sup>49</sup> But the adoption of the finality resolution by the Whigs ended hopes in that direction. The Democratic nominee and platform were equally unsatisfactory, and so the third party in Ohio accepted its national convention's nomination of John P. Hale and George W. Julian as the only solution.

Between the major parties the campaign in Ohio, though bitterly contested, was as devoid of principle as elsewhere. Both parties tried to win Catholic support, the Whigs by playing up a Catholic

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, June 19, 1852, and following.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, July 22, 1852.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 12, 1852.

<sup>49</sup> Mar. 27, Apr. 17, May 8, 1852.



disfranchising clause in the constitution of Pierce's native state and the Democrats by publishing Scott's "native American" letters of earlier years with appropriate comment. In reply, the Democrats denied that Pierce was responsible for the New Hampshire constitution, while the Whigs quoted Scott's later and more complimentary opinions of the foreign-born. The Whigs charged the Democrats with being pro-British because of their free trade principles as indorsed by British newspapers, and imported a glib-tongued Irish orator to assist in divorcing the Irish from their Democratic fealty. The Democrats, in response, attacked the Whigs for favoring Tory protectionism, such as had caused Ireland's miseries. Pierce's war record was ridiculed by the Whigs, while, on the other hand, Scott was charged with being a militarist by the Democrats. The latter also brought alleged Whig corruption into the fray and charged Corwin with fraud in the case of a Mexican mineral claim. Besides trying to attract the Irish, the Whigs went after the German vote and circulated large numbers of pamphlets in German in the counties where Whig postmasters reported it worth while. The Whig organization was excellent and Whig hopes ran high.<sup>50</sup>

More important to Whig success than Irish or German votes were those of the Free Soilers, or Free Democrats, as they now called themselves. Every effort was made to win them over, an antislavery newspaper, the *Forest City*, being established at Cleveland for that purpose. Greeley, through the New York *Tribune*, pleaded with the Western Reserve not to vote for Hale, as such a course would only elect Pierce. He and Senator Ben Wade stumped northern Ohio for Scott. Wade, after an interview with the Whig candidate, wrote too enthusiastically to Daniel R. Tilden that Scott had said that he would rather lose his right arm than consent to have slavery extended. Tilden, a Free Soiler hitherto, took the stump for Scott and incautiously made use of the letter. Some southern Whigs, in alarm, secured from the Whig candidate a denial of the authenticity of the remark, which forced Wade to admit that the quota-

<sup>50</sup> A. F. Perry, chairman of the State central committee, wrote Corwin that but few things more could have been done with any amount of money. Oct. 11, 1852, Corwin MSS. (Library of Congress).

tion, as repeated by Tilden, was "entirely inaccurate."<sup>51</sup>

Such tactics only angered the Free Democrats, and when the Whig press pleaded with them to vote for Scott on the ground that he would not be bound by the platform, the *Ashtabula Sentinel* answered, "We do not desire to smuggle anti-slavery men or measures into the coming or any administration, and we will not do it."<sup>52</sup> Hale, the third party presidential candidate, was brought into the Reserve to help Giddings hold Free Democratic ranks intact, and Chase and E. S. Hamlin also rendered aid. Giddings was fighting for his political life as a new apportionment act had placed him in a district seemingly Democratic. Chase had returned to the third party fold after the Democratic convention had nominated Pierce and indorsed the Compromise. He had done so reluctantly, calling himself an "Independent Democrat" and regarding the nomination of Hale by the antislavery men as a temporary expedient.

A flood of oratory engulfed the Buckeye State with Horace Greeley, Sam Houston, Stephen A. Douglas, John P. Hale, General Joseph Lane and others augmenting the eloquence of such local celebrities as Ewing, Allen, Tod, Medary, Wade, Chase and Giddings. The Whigs played a trump card by bringing General Scott himself into the State, though he was ostensibly on his way to Kentucky to select a site for an asylum for infirm soldiers. His tour took him from Pittsburgh to Maysville (Ky.) by way of Cleveland, Columbus and Chillicothe, and large crowds turned out to see the general and hear his non-political remarks, especially attuned to the ears of the Irish and Germans present.

The October election for supreme judge, and member of the Board of Public Works gave the Democrats a substantial plurality.<sup>53</sup> Twelve Democrats, seven Whigs and two Free Democrats were elected to Congress. Giddings won his fight while from a neighboring Reserve district Edward Wade, Free Democrat, joined him in the national House. All this foreshadowed the result in November.

<sup>51</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Aug. 9, 18, 26, 31, 1852; *Ashtabula Sentinel*, Sept. 4, 1852. ♡

<sup>52</sup> Sept. 11, 1852.

<sup>53</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Nov. 2, 1852.

The only cause for worry in the Democratic camp was the situation in Cincinnati. Here a bitter factional war was being waged between the regular organization, known as the "Miami Tribe," and a group led by Timothy Day, former editor of the *Enquirer*, and Charles Reemelin, influential among the Germans.<sup>54</sup> The Miamis controlled the county convention whereupon the other faction bolted and supported in part the Whig local ticket, though not the State or national tickets. In the October election the Miami Tribe was defeated through the defection of the German wards. Thereupon Reemelin demanded that two of its members resign from the State electoral ticket. The *Enquirer* made the same suggestion (though it was hostile to Reemelin) in the interests of the national ticket. Washington McLean, one of the "Tribesmen" on the electoral ticket, did in fact resign, but later withdrew his resignation at the behest of the State central committee. In spite of this local war, however, Hamilton County gave its vote to the Democrats at the November election. The Germans, satisfied with their defeat of the Miami local ticket, refused to carry their insurgency any further.

The Whigs strained every nerve to overcome the effect of the October defeat and succeeded in polling for Scott almost as great a vote as for Clay in 1844, but Democrats and Free Democrats worked equally hard with even more favorable results. Pierce received 169,160 votes to Scott's 152,626, while Hale had 31,782, which was only 3,600 under Van Buren's total in 1848.<sup>55</sup> The figures speak for themselves. With an excellent organization, a popular candidate and a full vote, the Whigs had failed because the third party, begun in 1848, largely as a Whig secession, had, after severe trials, established itself permanently and placed the Whigs in a distinct minority. The Democrats, holding their ranks largely intact since 1848, had won every election and would continue to win unless some political cataclysm should occur to shatter their unity or force their opponents to coalesce. In carrying the State, Pierce

<sup>54</sup> Cincinnati *Enquirer*, Aug.-Oct., 1852.

<sup>55</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 23, 1852.

had almost the same percentage of the total vote that Polk had had in losing it in 1844. But the remarkable thing is not that the Democrats had gained nothing since 1844 but that they had lost so little. Few were the Democratic recruits in the third party. A good organization, a positive, even somewhat radical, program on State issues, a skilful avoidance of the slavery issue and a clearer conception than their opponents of the forces that were stirring America to a kind of ferment in the early fifties explain their successes. To quote a Whig version of the result: "We have been fighting against the destructive tendencies of Dorrism, Anti-rentism, Fillibusterism, Native Americanism, Abolitionism and Locofocoism. Our triumph would have been the triumph of conservative and healthy influences."<sup>56</sup> But the America of the fifties was ready for experiment and change, whether "healthy" or not. Whig negation could not suffice.

The victorious Democrats, having overwhelmed their opponents in the presidential election, fell to fighting among themselves over the spoils. Trouble appeared first in the State convention, held in January to nominate a State ticket.<sup>57</sup> Ostensibly the governorship was the chief bone of contention but the approaching distribution of federal offices made each faction eager for the prestige of controlling the convention. Medary and the Miami faction of the Cincinnati Democracy backed George W. Manypenny, member of the Board of Public Works and favorite of the "Young America" element, while the "old fogies," or "Sawbucks"—really the Allen faction of other years—rallied to Lieutenant-Governor William Medill, long a faithful supporter of Allen. After a sharp struggle Medill was successful by the bare margin of three votes. The platform played up several aspects of radicalism—manifest destiny, "Young America" and Locofocoism—but omitted any mention of the Baltimore national platform with its indorsement of the Compromise. To embarrass the victorious faction, the Medary-Manypenny element proposed a resolution to supply this omission.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 29, 1852.

<sup>57</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Jan. 8, 10, 1853; *Ohio State Journal*, Jan. 10, 11, 12, 1853.



hoping to charge their opponents with hostility to the Pierce administration if they rejected it. Nevertheless, it was defeated by a vote similar to that cast for Medill. This evoked criticisms outside the State, but Chase, looking longingly toward the Democrats, saw in the vote an indication of antislavery sentiment.

The struggle over the federal patronage continued with great bitterness after the convention adjourned, centering around Medary's candidacy for the postmaster-generalship. Though backed by most of the Ohio Congressmen, members of the legislature, the presidential electors and the majority of the party papers, he had enemies so bitter and vindictive that they stopped at no means to ruin him. Emissaries of both factions visited the President-elect in New Hampshire to offer their views and presently the newspapers took up the controversy. In a series of scathing editorials the orthodox Democratic Cincinnati *Enquirer* went over Medary's career, omitting nothing in its attempt to prove his unfitness even for a subordinate place in the administration.<sup>58</sup> The papers especially friendly to Allen and Medill supported the *Enquirer*, while the *Statesman* defended Medary, and was backed by most of the county papers. No controversy between the veteran editor and the Whigs had aroused such bitterness or produced more intemperate language. Such a situation destroyed whatever chances Ohio might have had for a cabinet office. The internecine war ended when Medary retired from the *Statesman*, poorly requited for his years of battling for Democratic success. His son-in-law, James H. Smith, and the brilliant young Samuel S. Cox (soon to acquire the nickname "Sunset") succeeded to the control of the *Statesman* and old animosities were allowed to die down. The struggle for offices between "Miamis" and "Sawbucks" went on under the surface but no longer threatened the disruption of the party. Strange as it might seem, there was no trace of these dissensions in the campaign of 1853. The Democrats could belabor each other vigorously until the enemy came on the scene.

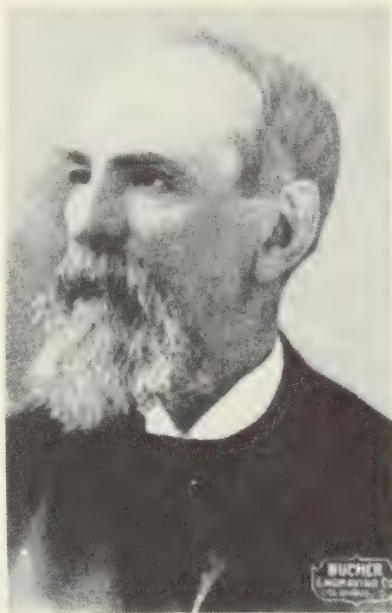
Meanwhile the Whigs were too apathetic and discouraged to take

<sup>58</sup> Jan. 30, Feb. 8, 11, 12, 20, 22, 1853.

advantage of the troubles in the camp of the victors. A thinly attended convention nominated for governor, Nelson Barrere, congressman from a normally Democratic district in the southern part of the State, and declared in a brief platform the party's purpose to stand by the Union against faction at home and abroad.<sup>59</sup> Negation took the place of principles. The Whigs had no policies and but feeble hopes, but they refused to surrender. The term "National Conservative Party," used in the platform, was a fitting designation.

The Free Democrats were enthusiastic as never before. Their large vote in the presidential election had given them a new confidence, and their State convention took a new departure. Realizing that the party's interests had been too narrowly circumscribed, the convention proceeded to adopt a platform embracing, besides antislavery principles, almost every variety of radicalism from free trade to temperance reform and Negro suffrage.<sup>60</sup> Some of the former Whigs, led by Joseph M. Root, objected, but to no avail. The party was playing for the support of liberals in both the old parties and had to give proof of its genuine radicalism by a comprehensive program. Samuel Lewis once more was drafted for the governorship and gave a reluctant assent.

The campaign was dull and spiritless except where the temperance reformers were active.<sup>61</sup> The Democrats, certain of victory, avoided the liquor issue by making no campaign for their State



12. SAMUEL SULLIVAN COX

<sup>59</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 23, 24, 1853.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 13, 14, 1853.

<sup>61</sup> The Maine Law temperance movement is dealt with in Chapter VIII.

ticket. The Whigs, certain of defeat, did not waste energies in a hopeless fight. Chase and Lewis toured the State for the Free Democrats, but temperance, rather than slavery, was the key-note of their campaign. Chase was not without hope that the third party, aided by a few radical Democrats, might hold the balance of power in the next assembly and bring about his re-election to the Senate. Consequently, he stressed the similarity in principles between the two organizations and corresponded actively with a group of northwestern Democrats whose viewpoint was quite similar to his own. But his hopes were frustrated by the sweeping character of the Democratic victory. That party gained an overwhelming majority in the next assembly, leaving no occasion for bargains with the Chase following. The Democratic State ticket also had a majority over the combined votes of the other two tickets.<sup>62</sup>

William Medill, already governor by virtue of Governor Wood's resignation in July to become American consul at Valparaiso, Chile, became chief executive in his own right in January, 1854. Unique in Ohio history as a bachelor governor, this veteran politician from Fairfield County had served a long apprenticeship in politics. Coming to Ohio from Newcastle County, Delaware, where he was born in 1801, he had served in the General Assembly, 1835-1838, had been elected speaker in 1836, had been a member of Congress for two terms, and had held the offices of Assistant Postmaster-General and Commissioner of Indian Affairs under President Polk. After his services as president of the Constitutional Convention in 1850-1851, he had been nominated for lieutenant-governor and elected to that new office. His gubernatorial victory in 1853 was accompanied by Democratic control of both houses of the assembly with record-breaking majorities. Never had the situation seemed so favorable for a successful administration.

<sup>62</sup> Medill had 147,633 votes, Barrere 85,863, Lewis 50,346 (*Ohio Statesman*, Dec. 14, 1853). Medill was already governor as Governor Wood had resigned in July to become consul at Valparaiso, Chile.

## CHAPTER X

# Nebraska and Nativism

THE middle years of the decade produced the most striking party revolution in the history of Ohio politics. A triumphant major party, having crushed its chief opponent in a series of elections and seemingly assured its supremacy for many years to come, was suddenly struck down in the midst of its prosperity and its very existence endangered. In opposition appeared a seemingly in-harmonious alliance of elements that presently emerged as a virile new party with an effective program and a powerful organization. The direct cause of this overturn was the Nebraska Bill of Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois which repealed the Missouri Compromise, and opened to slavery the region north of the line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . The bill made the slavery question again the leading party issue throughout the country and ended the sectional peace of the Compromise of 1850. "Bleeding Kansas" destroyed old alignments and helped to establish a new political order. Contemporaneously, a nativist movement emerged with startling suddenness to muddy the political waters still further. For a time it rivalled the Anti-Nebraska movement in strength, but its shallower roots and the growing fierceness of the slavery controversy produced a decline almost as rapid as its rise. The principal theme of the story of these significant years, 1854-1856, is therefore the sectional question rather than the problem of the foreign-born.

There was no hint of impending calamity when the Democratic State convention of 1854 met in January as usual to name candidates for the Board of Public Works and a supreme judgeship.<sup>1</sup> There was little for the rival factions to fight over, and the meeting would have been comparatively harmonious had not a proposal been made to indorse the Baltimore national platform of 1852, with

<sup>1</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Jan. 7, 9, 11, 1854.



its pledges to uphold the Compromise of 1850. It had been rejected the year before. The northern Ohio delegates opposed the motion but it carried, 222 to 58, amid much confusion. Such an action dealt the finishing blow to Chase's dream of an antislavery Democracy and formally aligned the party in Ohio with the position of the national Democrats. This was not done without protest, for three of the radical northwestern organs severely criticised the convention's action, and one of them, the *Paulding Democrat*, under the influence of Alexander S. Latty, close friend of Chase, repudiated both the platform and the nominees.<sup>2</sup> But in the main the opposition was confined to a futile minority.

Chase's senatorial seat was the great prize before the rival factions when the General Assembly, with its overwhelming Democratic majority, met in the winter of 1853-1854. The William Allen faction, bent on returning its chief to his old place, had already launched its campaign with the establishment of a new State organ, the *Ohio State Democrat*,<sup>3</sup> designed to supplant the *Ohio Statesman*, which, despite Medary's retirement, still reflected his viewpoint. The opposition to Allen was not united on any one candidate, though George W. Manypenny, newly appointed United States Commissioner for Indian Affairs and a former member of the State Board of Public Works, had the largest body of supporters. Medary himself was not without hopes and resigned his new appointment as minister to Chile just before the legislative caucus convened. For 37 ballots the Democratic assemblymen struggled to name a senatorial candidate but without success.<sup>4</sup> Allen, usually in the lead, could not muster the necessary majority. The caucus then adjourned to meet later in the session.

This delay brought the bitterness of the factional fight into the open. the newspapers began to debate the matter, and the *State Democrat* and the *Statesman* presently were engaged in bitter warfare. The latter attributed Medary's failure to secure a cabinet seat the year before to the Allen faction and demanded Allen's

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Columbus *Ohio Columbian*, Feb. 8, 1854.

<sup>3</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Dec. 12, 1853.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 25, 27, 1854, for caucus votes.

defeat for the Senate. To add to the bitterness, the recently introduced Nebraska bill now became a bone of contention. The *State Democrat*, speaking for the Allen following, criticised the bill, while the *Statesman* tried to make support of it a condition of party loyalty. Of the various senatorial candidates, only Medary gave public support to the Douglas measure. When the legislative caucus met again, however, he withdrew, to be followed after a few ballots by Manypenny, whose support went to Judge Thomas Bartley of the State supreme court. But the Allen men would not give way, and neither Bartley nor Allen could secure a majority, for thirteen votes were controlled by George E. Pugh, recently attorney-general. The deadlock continued until March 3 through three meetings of the caucus. Then Allen gave way to the inevitable and withdrew. On the 79th ballot Pugh was rewarded for his tenacity with a seat in the United States Senate.<sup>5</sup> The outcome was a happy one for the party as Pugh had not been involved in the factional struggle but represented the Young America element primarily. On the Nebraska issue his position was not known until after his election. Then he came to the support of the measure as, indeed, almost all the party leaders were doing, though with considerable reluctance in most cases. It was no longer regarded as politic to make the measure an issue within the party, and Pugh's position made for harmony.

With the senatorship out of the way the Nebraska question occupied the center of the political stage. The story of the struggle in Congress over the Nebraska bill lies outside the field of Ohio history, though Ohioans played a leading part in that bitter contest, notably Salmon P. Chase and Benjamin F. Wade in the Senate, and Lewis D. Campbell in the House. Chase, in a popular role for the first time in his public career, penned the famous "Appeal of the Independent Democrats," to arouse the North against the proposed repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Giddings and Edward Wade were also among the signers of the "Appeal."<sup>6</sup>

The leading Whig papers in Ohio were hostile to the Nebraska

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 24, Mar. 3, 4, 1854.

<sup>6</sup> *Ohio Columbian*, Feb. 1, 1854.

bill from the beginning. They held that the proposal would destroy the existing sectional peace and revive the slavery agitation. Whig conservatives, opposed to any disturbance of the status quo, joined hands with antislavery radicals, who were fearful over the possible extension of slavery into the new territories. Within three weeks Chase and the *Ohio State Journal* were in substantial accord. The Right and the Extreme Left were drawing together.

Meanwhile the Democracy hesitated in bewilderment and confusion. At first uncertain of the national administration's position, the party press was chary of comments. But the leading organs, the *Ohio Statesman*, the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, were soon ready to defend the principle of popular sovereignty for the territories, while others hesitated between a policy of silence and one of mild criticism. The *Ohio State Democrat* and the Chillicothe *Advertiser*, reflecting Allen's position, were hostile to the measure. No less a personage than Francis P. Blair, Sr., veteran Jacksonian editor, wrote to Allen from Washington urging him to assume the leadership of an anti-administration movement in Ohio and appealing to his Jacksonian traditions for support.<sup>7</sup> Soon after the senatorship struggle ended, Chase also wrote to Allen in an effort to enlist him in the new Anti-Nebraska movement.<sup>8</sup> Predicting a reorganization of parties in the near future, Chase declared, "There must be as heretofore a Democratic and a Conservative party under some name. It would give me the greatest pleasure to acknowledge you as a leader in a really progressive, earnestly avowed democracy, suited to the times." But the veteran Democratic leader, aggrieved though he may have been at his treatment by his party, did not respond to this tender of leadership. Strength of party ties, dislike of Chase, absence of any deep convictions on slavery—these, or some other motive, may have held him back. Thereby he missed a golden opportunity to restore his political fortunes. He might, in the new Republican party, have returned to public life and enjoyed a greater distinction than finally came

<sup>7</sup> Blair to Allen, Feb. 10, 1854, Allen MSS. (Library of Congress).

<sup>8</sup> Chase to Allen, Apr. 8, 1854, *ibid.*

to him in his old age when he emerged from retirement to lead the Ohio Democracy in the "Greenback era."<sup>9</sup>

But open insurgency appeared where the Democratic party was tintured with Free Soil leanings. Joseph Cable, editor of the Sandusky *Mirror* and former Congressman, became the spokesman of this element in northern Ohio, though several Democratic papers, especially in the northwest, were quite sympathetic with his viewpoint.<sup>10</sup> A Paulding County meeting, under the auspices of A. S. Latty, recommended a bolting State convention of antislavery Democrats.<sup>11</sup> At Cincinnati nearly a thousand Democrats signed a call for an Anti-Nebraska meeting, which was largely attended. Timothy Day, former editor of the *Enquirer*, Charles Reemelin, German leader, Dr. George Fries, George Hoadly, Stephen Molitor and other prominent anti-Miami Democrats participated. The German Democrats, at a special meeting, indorsed the Paulding County proposal for an "anti-corruption Democratic State Convention."<sup>12</sup> In the legislature several resolutions were introduced attacking the Nebraska bill. One set, offered by James Mackenzie, radical spokesman for the northwest and editor of the Kalida *Venture*, criticised the bill for its failure to provide complete popular sovereignty,<sup>13</sup> a point which Chase was trying to clear up by his Senate amendment authorizing the new territory to elect all its officials and to abolish slavery, if it so wished. This was an issue over which radical Democrats felt much concern. But the Democratic majority in the assembly, torn by the senatorship struggle and unwilling to embarrass the national administration, ended by doing nothing.

Not within the Democratic party but outside it were the opponents of the Nebraska bill to achieve their ends. A great fusion movement combining men of all parties was the instrument. Its

<sup>9</sup> See Volume V of this series.

<sup>10</sup> Cable to Chase, Feb. 7, 1854, Chase MSS. (Library of Congress); Sandusky *Mirror*, in *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 1, 1854; Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, Mar. 1, 8, 29, 1854.

<sup>11</sup> *Ohio Columbian*, Mar. 29, 1854.

<sup>12</sup> Cincinnati *Gazette*, Mar. 24, 25, Apr. 7, 1854.

<sup>13</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 15, 1854; James W. Taylor to Chase, Feb. 19, 1854, Chase MSS. (Library of Congress).



beginnings are found in the numerous "anti-repeal" meetings held all over the State soon after the Nebraska question began to agitate Congress.<sup>14</sup> The best known was held at Columbus on February 14. It was called by a committee of nine representing both Whig and Democratic parties. Judge Joseph R. Swan, a well-known independent Democrat and one of Ohio's ablest legal commentators, presided while John W. Andrews, Democrat, and Samuel Galloway, Whig, were the speakers.<sup>15</sup> Among the resolutions was a recommendation for a State Anti-Nebraska convention. The Free Democrats, the third party men, were somewhat critical of the conservative character of the meeting but fell in line as the movement was in the right direction. Other local meetings indorsed the idea of a State mass convention, and a meeting of some members of the assembly chose March 22 as the date.<sup>16</sup> A notable list of speakers of all parties was invited. The movement was strengthened by a large Cincinnati gathering at which one of the speakers, Charles Reemelin, attacked the Nebraska bill as undemocratic and discriminatory toward the foreign-born.<sup>17</sup> This was the German position.

On a cold, wet, disagreeable March day the State Anti-Nebraska convention assembled at Columbus in the large but unfinished Town Street Methodist Church, whose temporary steps collapsed from the weight of the crowd at the close of the afternoon session and injured several persons.<sup>18</sup> Estimates of the number present varied from 400 to 3,000, according to the friendliness of the newspaper representatives. While acclaimed as nonpartisan in character, the meeting was attended by many active party men who were concerned at what the existing political turmoil might bring forth. Of the invited speakers, Chase, David K. Cartter and Jacob Brinkerhoff were present, while Thomas Ewing, Charles Reemelin and Senator Wade sent letters. But there was no shortage of oratorical talent, Benjamin F. Leiter, Judge Rufus Spalding, General Samuel

<sup>14</sup> A Cleveland meeting on January 28 may have been the first. *Cleveland Herald*, Jan. 26, 30, 1854.

<sup>15</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 13, 15, 16, 1854.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 25, Mar. 3, 1854.

<sup>17</sup> *Cincinnati Gazette*, Mar. 6, 8, 14, 1854.

<sup>18</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Mar. 22, 23, 24, 1854.

Lahm, Samuel Galloway and others being called upon. The resolutions as adopted protested against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, attacked the genuineness of the popular sovereignty in the Nebraska bill, and declared that the North would not permit the territories to become slave. They upheld the principle that liberty was national and slavery sectional, urged Ohio's representatives in Congress to oppose the pending bill, and praised the conduct of the two United States Senators. There was nothing in the resolutions to which any Whig, Democrat, or Free Democrat might take exception. The convention thus instituted harmoniously the first stage of a political revolution that was to transform Ohio politics.

Further action awaited the final disposition of the Nebraska bill by Congress, but the air was filled with talk of new party alignments. The Free Democrats felt the most concern over the situation. Their excellent showing in the last election made them loathe to sacrifice a promising future and compromise their principles for the sake of possible immediate success.<sup>19</sup> Yet the Anti-Nebraska ground-swell had given an impetus to the antislavery cause which might be lost through lack of whole-hearted cooperation of the various elements. The Whigs, with little to lose, were more ready to participate in a new movement. A powerful factor working in this direction was the revived *Ohio State Journal*. That near-bankrupt political organ had been taken over by Oran Follett of Sandusky, a Whig editor of experience and ability. A personal friend of Corwin and Fillmore, and an enemy of "higher law sectionalists," he was regarded by the third party supporters as "an incorrigible hunker."<sup>20</sup> Follett, though distrustful of antislavery radicals,<sup>21</sup> was thoroughly in sympathy with the Anti-Nebraska cause and ready to merge the Whig organization into a fusion movement. He conducted the *Ohio State Journal* with tact and moderation, his past conservative affiliations proving an asset in a movement of radical tendencies, while his political experience proved even more useful not only in

<sup>19</sup> For example, see *Ohio Columbian*, Apr. 26, May 17, 1854.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 8, 1854.

<sup>21</sup> See his correspondence with Thomas Ewing in *Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* (Cincinnati), XIII (1918), 47-55.

his conduct of the paper but in the field of under-cover political management as well.

The news of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill through the national House of Representatives was the signal for action. Calling upon all parties, not as distinct bodies but as "the Democracy of Numbers, the Friends of Liberty everywhere and of all parties," the *Ohio State Journal* on May 23 urged that immediate steps be taken to organize for the repeal of the hated measure. Simultaneously other papers took the same stand, the *Cleveland Herald* suggesting a State convention on June 17, July 4, or July 13.<sup>22</sup> The *Journal* accepted the last date,<sup>23</sup> the *Cincinnati Gazette* concurred,<sup>24</sup> and the three leading Whig papers thus assumed sponsorship of the new movement, in itself a guarantee against radicalism. The Free Democrats proved quite willing to cooperate, and plans for a State convention were soon under way. Judge Joseph R. Swan and John W. Andrews, from their connection with the first Anti-Nebraska meetings, and James H. Coulter, representing the Free Democrats, constituted the committee at Columbus to issue the formal call. The original plan for a delegate convention to transact business and a mass convention to create enthusiasm was abandoned in favor of a delegate body alone because of the harvest season then at hand. The call allotted one delegate for every four thousand population but each county was to have at least three delegates.<sup>25</sup>

On July 13, anniversary of the passage of the Ordinance of 1787, the fusion convention met at Columbus.<sup>26</sup> On the same day at Indianapolis the Indiana Anti-Nebraska convention was in session, while Michigan had acted a few days earlier. The revolution was on in the "Old Northwest." The Ohio convention, with every county but two represented and a thousand delegates present, was presided over by Benjamin F. Leiter, former Democratic speaker of the assembly, while Judge Rufus P. Spalding, both Democrat and

<sup>22</sup> May 24, 1854.

<sup>23</sup> May 25, 1854.

<sup>24</sup> May 26, 1854.

<sup>25</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, June 10, 26, 1854.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, July 13, 14, 15, 1854. It assembled first in the city hall, then adjourned to "Neil's New Hall," a larger building.

Free Soiler in the past, reported the platform from the resolutions committee. Only one of the seven resolutions was really vital. This contained a pledge to render "inoperative and void" that portion of the Kansas-Nebraska Act which affected territory free by the Missouri Compromise and to oppose by every lawful means any further increase of slave territory or slave states. Radicalism was held in check by a rule referring all resolutions to the resolutions committee before any action could be taken. At a mass meeting held in the evening an attempt to pass radical anti-Fugitive Slave Law resolutions was also prevented, either intentionally or through a misunderstanding, but it produced some dissatisfaction among the extremists.

There was no opposition to naming candidates for State offices as a means of testing Anti-Nebraska strength. Judge Swan was unanimously nominated for supreme court judge. A Van Buren Democrat of 1848, he represented both Democrats and third party men. Jacob Blickensderfer, a Whig, was named for the Board of Public Works by acclamation after the progress of the balloting indicated that he would win. No other offices were to be filled. A central committee of thirteen members was chosen to guide the movement and one of five to correspond with other states as to a national convention. A telegram of greeting was sent to the Indiana convention and a reply received before adjournment.

The best known Ohio political leaders had not attended. Chase, Wade, Giddings, Campbell and other members of Congress were still at Washington. Samuel Lewis, veteran third party leader, had died the preceding month. Ewing and Corwin remained in retirement, though the former had been cautiously sympathetic toward the movement in the spring. Leiter was the only Democrat of any prominence present, though the county delegations, especially from northern Ohio, contained a liberal sprinkling of the rank and file. Nevertheless, the convention was largely attended and well conducted, the presence of such practical politicians as Spalding, Root, Brinkerhoff, Swan, Follett, Galloway, Eckley, Cowen and others insuring able leadership and skilful management. This was



especially evident in the avoidance of radicalism on slavery and in the exclusion of the temperance issue, in which respects the Ohio convention differed from its neighbors of Michigan and Indiana.

No formal name was given the fusion movement, the convention preferring to regard it as an uprising of the people rather than the formation of a party. But immediately after adjournment, the *Ohio State Journal*, now the State organ of fusion, placed the title "Republican Nominations" over the names of Swan and Blickensderfer. This was the term used in Michigan and Vermont. Not all the press concurred, however, and as a consequence there was no uniformity. "People's Movement" and "Anti-Nebraska Movement" were more often preferred by the friends of fusion while their opponents called them "Fusionists," and presently—for reasons that will appear later—"Know-Nothings." There was not as yet a "Republican Party."

The year that produced the Anti-Nebraska movement marked the first appearance of organized political nativism in Ohio politics. The Know-Nothing movement, joint product of the alarm of the Atlantic seaboard over the tremendous influx of immigrants around 1850 and of a long-continued anti-Catholic agitation, swept over the Northwest with amazing rapidity and exerted in the middle fifties an influence that for a brief space threatened to eclipse that of the Anti-Nebraska movement.

The population of foreign birth in Ohio in 1850 was but a fraction over eleven per cent, of which over half was German and nearly one-fourth Irish.<sup>27</sup> To this must be added a small number of native-born of foreign parentage and an important, but uncertain, number of Pennsylvania Germans, located chiefly in the eastern and north central parts of the State.<sup>28</sup> Only in Cincinnati

<sup>27</sup> *Seventh Census of the U. S. 1850, Compendium*, 118.

<sup>28</sup> It is impossible to estimate how numerous or widespread this element was, but a ledger in the Chase MSS. (Library of Congress), labelled "Vote by Counties—German Voters, 1848-1851," has some rather surprising estimates, made by Whig postmasters, for the election of 1852. (How Chase obtained it is uncertain.) In Canton the postmaster reported 1,200 European German voters but stated that more than 3,000 voters spoke German in the county. Yet the total vote of Stark County in 1852 was only 6700! In Trumbull County 2,000 German voters were reported, two-thirds American born. Perry County, lying outside the Pennsylvania German belt,

and its environs was the foreign population sufficiently concentrated to arouse the concern of native Americans. Thirty per cent of the foreign-born of the State lived there.<sup>29</sup> In the city itself nearly half the population was of foreign birth, with the Germans constituting over three-fifths of the immigrants and the Irish over one-fourth.<sup>30</sup> The rest of Ohio's foreign-born, for the most part, lived in the northern half of the State. The counties on Lake Erie, accessible from the East, and the canal counties in the northwest, with much unsettled land, drew the largest share of the aliens, while the Pennsylvania German region, just south of the Reserve, was adding somewhat to its already considerable German population.<sup>31</sup> Immigration had contributed much to Ohio's rapid growth and development, and there had been no disposition to look with disfavor on any of the newcomers. The friction between German or Irish and native was no more evident than that between New Englander and Virginian. Know Nothingism, therefore, did not, except in Cincinnati, find Ohioans much inclined toward nativism.

Politically, the support of the foreign-born had been eagerly sought, the delicate balance of parties tending to augment their importance. The Democrats, with their radical, equalitarian appeal, had been much more successful than the Whigs, but the latter did not abandon hope down to 1852. Indeed, the succession of Whig defeats due to the Free Soil defection of 1848 made it imperative that a part of the foreign-born should be drawn into the Whig camp. This explains the desperate efforts of Scott's campaign managers to attract Irish and German votes in 1852 when their campaign in the North consisted largely of appeals to race feelings and religious prejudices. Their failure and the prospect of increasing numbers of foreign-born voters joining the Democratic ranks,

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had 700 German voters, two-thirds from Pennsylvania. Montgomery, containing the city of Dayton, was given 3,000 by the postmaster, only 500 of them European Germans.

<sup>29</sup> *Seventh Census of the U. S., Compendium*, tables on page 284 and following.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 399.

<sup>31</sup> Of the 22 counties having more than ten per cent foreign-born, 15 were in the northern half of the State; of the seven in the southern half, three can be explained by the presence of three of the four largest cities.

as the flood of immigration continued, made further Whig efforts appear futile and created in the party an undercurrent of anti-alien resentment. "Still heavier will be the foreign vote 4 years hence," wrote a Whig editor despairingly "and nothing but a miracle can break through its blindness and infatuation."<sup>32</sup>

Yet the force that contributed most to the rise of Know-Nothingism in Ohio was anti-Catholicism, which in its origin was by no means anti-foreign. This can be illustrated by a number of incidents prior to the appearance of the new movement. At the time of the Kossuth enthusiasm in 1852, hostility toward Catholicism cropped out at Cincinnati where a group of radicals, many of them of foreign birth, criticised the unfriendly attitude of the Roman Church toward the Hungarian patriot.<sup>33</sup> A newspaper war between radicals and Catholics was carried on for several weeks but died down with the advent of the presidential campaign.

The anti-Catholic feeling revived, however, in the spring of 1853 and found echoes in other parts of the State as well. The cause this time was the Catholic position toward the new school law, designed to reorganize and strengthen the common school system.<sup>34</sup> A Catholic newspaper at Cincinnati criticised the law, and presently Archbishop John B. Purcell, in a public letter, objected to the taxation of Catholics for the support of public schools that were, he charged, really sectarian in character. A newly established anti-Catholic paper at Cincinnati added fuel to the flames, and the spring election there turned on the religious issue, the ticket regarded as pro-Catholic being defeated. Excitement grew higher when the mayor attempted to prevent a Protestant agitator from making anti-Catholic speeches in the public square. Protestants and nativists were much incensed at this and compelled the mayor to give way, a committee of one hundred citizens even demanding his resignation.<sup>35</sup> The excitement soon died down, but the ill feel-

<sup>32</sup> John Teesdale to John McLean, Nov. 19, 1852, McLean MSS. (Library of Congress).

<sup>33</sup> *Nonpareil*, Feb.-May, 1852; Cincinnati *Citizen*, in *Ohio State Journal*, June 3, 1852.

<sup>34</sup> See Chapter VII.

<sup>35</sup> Cincinnati *Gazette*, Mar., Apr., May, 1853.

ings created by it persisted. Elsewhere anti-Catholicism was confined to mild newspaper criticisms of the Catholic position on the school law. When, in the fall of 1853, Father Alessandro Gavazzi, ex-priest and anti-Catholic agitator, appeared in the State, he was favorably received but apparently aroused only a passing interest.<sup>36</sup> Thus the religious issue seemed to have lost whatever importance it had possessed earlier.

At Cincinnati anti-Catholic feeling presently found a new outlet when late in the year Archbishop Gaetano Bedini, papal nuncio, appeared in the city. Bedini was popularly supposed to have played a leading part in suppressing revolutionary activities in Italy and was the target of bitter attacks by the radical elements, wherever he appeared. Aroused by an inflammable article in a German paper, the Society of Freemen, composed of German radicals, attempted to burn the archbishop in effigy, only to be attacked by the police. A riot followed in which one man was killed and several injured. When Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati offered a contribution to the injured, the Freemen Society rejected it in a stinging letter attacking Jesuitism as hostile to republican government. The affair had had its inception in the anti-Catholicism of the German radicals but the nativists now took it up. A mob of some five thousand, mostly American-born, proceeded to burn Bedini in effigy without interference from the police. The excitement continued through January while the trials of the policemen who had taken part in the Christmas riot were being held.<sup>37</sup> But nothing occurred to foment further trouble, and the Nebraska question presently absorbed public attention. The Bedini incident seemed closed. However, it had shown the existence of strong anti-Catholic sentiment in Ohio's metropolis, needing only an organization to make it a political force.

In predominantly Protestant small town and countryside, the latent anti-Catholic prejudice seems to boil over once every generation. In the 1850's many good Protestants associated Catholicism

<sup>36</sup> For example, *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 5, 1853; *Cleveland Herald*, Oct. 15, 1853; *Cincinnati Gazette*, Oct. 18, 19, 24, 1853.

<sup>37</sup> *Cincinnati Gazette*, Dec., 1853.-Jan., 1854.



with Irish turbulence and clannishness, dictation by an absolutist pope, hostility to the King James version of the Bible in the public schools, an immoral priesthood and corrupt politics. With some of these views many of the Germans heartily concurred. But they themselves were disliked by puritanical, church-going Americans for their hostility to the temperance movement, their violation of the puritan Sabbath, and the godlessness of many of the newcomers.<sup>38</sup>

"Protestant" wrote to the *Bucyrus Journal* a partial summary of the indictment:

"The Sabbath is openly profaned and set at naught among the Germans at Cincinnati and elsewhere; it is regarded as a gala-day, a day for operas and concerts and public parade. A foreign priesthood have proscribed God's own book in Protestant America, and avow their intention of burning the Bible whenever they find it in the hands of their deluded followers. This threat has been recently put into execution in this State. Add to this the sworn and determined attempt to destroy the common school system—the glory of our country—and is it not apparent that, if our institutions are to be perpetuated, Americans must take the matter in their own hands." <sup>39</sup>

These sentiments were strengthened by the feeling that reform was necessary to reduce the power of the ignorant foreign vote, controlled by selfish politicians, which helped to make the old parties reputed nests of corruption. The idea of a new reform organization, springing from the people and uncontaminated by contact with politicians, appealed to staid old Whig newspapers like the *Cincinnati Gazette*<sup>40</sup> and led no less a person than Justice John McLean of the United States Supreme Court to give it his indorsement.<sup>41</sup> There was also present a certain amount of anti-

<sup>38</sup> A convention of radical German associations, meeting at Cincinnati in March, 1854, passed resolutions against Sunday laws, the use of the Bible in public schools and prayers in Congress, and declared Roman Catholic bishops and priests enemies of the republic. *Cincinnati Gazette*, Mar. 27, 1854.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in *Ohio Statesman*, July 19, 1854.

<sup>40</sup> July 27, Aug. 21, 1854.

<sup>41</sup> Letters to Hector Orr and Dr. John J. Prettyman, Nov. 25, 1854. McLean MSS. (Library of Congress).

slavery feeling. The Anti-Nebraska agitation, breaking down old party barriers, sent many who were but little concerned over nativism into the new organization. It was out of such elements as these, plus the lure of secrecy, that the Know-Nothing movement in Ohio was compounded.

Politically, Know-Nothingism offered to all the discontented, whether nativists, Whigs, Anti-Nebraska men, or reformers in general, another effective rallying point against the Democrats. It did not seem to clash with the main purposes of the fusion movement and became almost at once an auxiliary of it. This gave to Know-Nothingism in Ohio an antislavery character that it presently found impossible to subordinate to its original nativistic, anti-Catholic aims, and which in the end proved its undoing. There was not sufficient genuine nativism in the State to build upon and the mixture of elements used proved too unsubstantial, as will be seen. But the Know-Nothing movement played an important role, nevertheless, in Ohio and the whole Northwest, a fact that has been quite generally overlooked because the organization did not, except for a futile minority, have an independent political existence as in New York and Massachusetts.

The appearance of Know-Nothingism in the East at first attracted slight attention in Ohio. Then, some time in the early spring, the first lodges were formed in the State, probably in several places simultaneously. The newspapers seemingly did not become aware of the fact until June. If later "confessions" by former members may be relied upon, the organizers represented the movement as one against abuses of all kinds in politics and in favor of restoring the government to pure American principles.<sup>42</sup> One of the abuses most stressed was the Democratic party's pandering to foreign prejudices and its efforts to make the Catholic religion an element in politics. Corruption in the county court house was often cited, an effective argument in an era of general complaint over high taxes. Thus Democrats were appealed to as well as voters of other parties with remarkable success. The organization grew so

<sup>42</sup> Lancaster *Ohio Eagle*, Feb. 22, Mar. 22, 1855.

rapidly that, according to its own figures (as published the following year by its enemies from its records) it had nearly 50,000 members in October, well distributed over the entire State except the thinly settled Northwest.<sup>43</sup>

The fusion attitude was friendly to the new secret order almost from the beginning. The *Ohio State Journal* had deplored the Bedini riots as subversive of law and order, defending Bedini and criticising the German Freemen Society.<sup>44</sup> Curiously enough, this was an anti-foreign but pro-Catholic position. The *Journal*, however, gave no further attention to this matter as it was desirous of winning the Germans and Irish over to the Anti-Nebraska cause and was interested in showing how the original Nebraska bill discriminated against them in the territorial franchise provision. This seemed so important to it that when the strength of Know-Nothingism began to be evident it adopted a coldly neutral attitude and refused to publish communications either way.<sup>45</sup> However, this could not last, so on July 8 it took a position openly but cautiously friendly to the secret order. It agreed with the Know-Nothings in their hostility to the "politico-religionists" under Jesuit priests who were trying to carry monarchical principles from Europe and who were strongly attached to the "Slave Democracy." But it refused to indorse the order's opposition to the Germans, declaring that they were trying to cut loose from their old party associations and were American citizens in fact. This became the position that the fusionists generally adopted and was virtually taken over next year by the Republican party. The German vote might thus be saved at the expense of the Catholic Irish, which was not so important and was unlikely to be detached from the Democratic party in any case. Such a course was not satisfactory to the genuine nativists but it served its purpose in 1854 at least.

The distinctly Know-Nothing papers were, in the main, not far removed from this attitude. They were best represented in Ohio by the *Cincinnati Times*, edited by James D. Taylor, better known

<sup>43</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Mar. 18, 1855.

<sup>44</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Jan. 17, 1854.

<sup>45</sup> June 19, 20, 27, 1854.

as "Pap" Taylor. Making the weekly edition of the *Times* a "yellow" journal of demagoguery and sensationalism, he gained for it a huge circulation in the rural districts of Ohio and several neighboring states.<sup>46</sup> The burden of his theme was anti-Catholicism. "It should never be lost sight of," he thundered, "that Romanism is the head and front and that native Americanism is secondary and contingent."<sup>47</sup> With this view most of the fusion papers were in harmony to the extent of neglecting or omitting the secondary aspect and playing up the first. With the Bedini incident in mind, this seemed safe ground to take. The Cincinnati Germans had participated in the fusion convention of July 13 and had even expressed sympathy with any movement against Popery or Jesuitism. There seemed to be a common bond between radical Germans and Know-Nothings in their anti-Catholicism, even though the shadow of nativism lurked in the background. This helps explain the emphasis on the religious issue by the fusion newspapers. Fomenting religious prejudice was good politics in 1854.

The election, however, did not turn on the twin issues of nativism and anti-Catholicism. Despite all the efforts of Democratic newspapers to shift the battle to these new questions, the Nebraska issue dominated the canvas. The fusionists knew their advantage and refused to be led astray. Intent on punishing the Democratic national administration, they found in the election of a new Congress their best opportunity for vindicating their Anti-Nebraska views. The two State offices at stake in the election were unimportant in themselves, and though the vote for them would be an index of the strength of the fusion movement, the election of Anti-Nebraska Congressmen would be a far more effective repudiation of the national administration's proslavery position.

Of the Ohio delegation in Congress in 1854, only four members, all Democrats, had voted for the Nebraska bill. Two of them did not seek renomination; a third was turned down by his district convention; while Edson B. Olds, of the Columbus district, after

<sup>46</sup> It claimed a circulation of 52,800, or 30,000 more than any journal in the West, doubtless an exaggeration.

<sup>47</sup> *Dollar Weekly Times*, Aug. 3, 1854.



some opposition, succeeded in securing a renomination. Samuel Galloway was the Anti-Nebraska candidate. Thus in only one case were the fusionists given an opportunity to vote against a Nebraska Congressman.

On the other hand, six Whigs, seven Democrats and two Free Democrats had opposed the bill with one Whig and one Democrat absent.<sup>48</sup> Five of the Whigs and the two Free Democrats were renominated by fusion conventions. Two of the Democrats retired, but the others sought renomination at the hands of their party and all but one received it. That one, Matthias H. Nichols of the Fourth district, was promptly taken up by the fusionists and made their candidate, the only Democratic Congressman so honored. But the other four, who had been renominated as Democrats, caused the fusionists some embarrassment. Since they had voted against the Nebraska bill, consistency seemed to require that the Anti-Nebraska men support them for reelection. On the other hand, they had not affiliated with the fusionists, and political considerations seemed to demand their heads. Few enough were the elective offices available in 1854 for the new movement without permitting four congressional seats to go by default to the Democrats. In the end, politics prevailed over principle and fusion candidates were named to oppose the four. Because the latter had refused to bolt their party, it was charged that they thereby virtually acquiesced in the Nebraska "fraud."

The Democratic party, on its part, did not grapple squarely with the thorny problem of the Nebraska bill. Nowhere was there any clear-cut defense of the measure as a party policy. Even Olds, who had voted for the bill, did not make his campaign upon that issue but tried to emphasize his record along other lines and his accomplishments for his district. Congressional and county conventions were Anti-Nebraska, pro-Nebraska or silent according to the sentiment of the particular localities. Agreement was impossible, so it was "live and let live." But this meant emphasizing the one issue upon which all elements were in substantial agreement—opposi-

<sup>48</sup> *House Journal*, 33 Cong., 1 Sess. (1853-54), 923-4.

tion to Know-Nothingism. These "Assassins of the Constitution" were dealt heavy blows and the foreign-born defended by Democratic papers and orators in the hope of drawing attention from the Nebraska issue.

The election, despite its seeming importance, caused little public excitement through the State as a whole. The Olds-Galloway contest was bitterly fought because of Olds's vote for the Nebraska measure, but usually Democratic discouragement and Know-Nothing secrecy kept things quiet. Had the more important State offices been at stake, doubtless this would not have been true. Nevertheless, the vote was larger than usual for a State campaign, though far behind the presidential struggle of 1852.

The fusionists triumphed, as was generally expected, but what was totally unexpected was the magnitude of their victory. The Cincinnati *Times* had optimistically predicted fusion victory in 17 of the 21 congressional districts,<sup>49</sup> while the *Ohio State Journal* had declared that the State ticket must have a twenty thousand majority to make an impressive showing.<sup>50</sup> But the final result gave every Congressman to the fusionists and a majority of 77,000 for Judge Swan with 78 out of the 88 counties in his favor!<sup>51</sup> No election since the beginning of the two-party system had shown such a complete overturn for the party in power. In no congressional district was the result even close. The largest majorities were rolled up in the Seventh and Eighth districts, old Whig strongholds in the Miami Valley, but the greatest overturn occurred in the three normally Democratic western and northwestern districts. To cap the climax, the largest fusion majority from a single county came from Hamilton where Judge Swan had 7,300 more votes than his opponent. Only three of the sixteen wards in Cincinnati remained Democratic. No wonder the *Gazette*, so long accustomed to defeat, reported bonfires and illuminations and shouting crowds thronging its office.<sup>52</sup> Its day of jubilee had indeed arrived.

<sup>49</sup> Oct. 5, 1851.

<sup>50</sup> Oct. 4, 1851.

<sup>51</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 25, 1854, for official returns. Only six counties supported Democratic congressional nominees.

<sup>52</sup> Oct. 11, 1854.

There can be no doubt that the Nebraska question contributed most to this result. Even Democrats and Know-Nothings admitted that it had been the paramount issue. No other question could have drawn together such divergent elements. Whig conservatives, opposing a reopening of the slavery question, Democratic radicals, dissatisfied with the Pierce-Douglas brand of popular sovereignty, Free Democrats and abolitionists objecting to any measure extending slavery, and many Germans, fearful of exclusion from the territories by the advance of slavery, united in a common movement to punish the national administration for the measure. This alone would have defeated the Democrats badly in 1854. But the complete collapse of the party was due to an unhappy combination of factors.

The reaction against Locofoco radicalism played its part. The business classes, angered at the weight of taxation put upon them by a recent court decision, struck at the party that was responsible for both the original constitutional provision and the resultant tax law.<sup>53</sup> The vote in Cincinnati shows how widespread this discontent was. That hard-headed business men, already threatened with a loss of southern trade because of the city's supposed abolition proclivities, would vote an antislavery ticket out of mere sentiment would be expecting too much from human nature. Business reasons drew them to the "American Reform" ticket, as the fusionists were labelled at Cincinnati. But the Democrats had lost caste even with the radicals. Northwestern Ohio, with its frontier characteristics, was affronted at both the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the defeat of a homestead bill in Congress. The party of the common man seemed to be turning to the worship of false gods.

Know-Nothingism was of great value to the Anti-Nebraska cause in Cincinnati and the conservative counties of the southern part of the State where old Whigs were slow to take fire over the slavery issue. Sometimes the secret order ran its own local candidates, and occasionally it supported a Democrat, but usually its weight was thrown to the fusion cause. How far it was a liability in antagoniz-

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter V.

ing the Germans is not easy to determine. Two of the three German papers at Cincinnati remained loyal to the Democrats and one German ward was carried by them, while at Columbus the Germans in the south end of the city rolled up their usual Democratic majority. In northern Ohio, however, heavy German defections contributed to the success of fusion in such counties as Stark and Seneca. Nebraska seemed to have counterbalanced nativism with the Germans.

Democratic factionalism also contributed to the party's general collapse. The Kilkenny fights over patronage and the United States Senatorship had left their marks, and the chance to pay off old scores was too tempting to be overlooked. In the northwestern counties bolting Democrats supplied the fusion nominees and the votes to elect them in two heavily Democratic congressional districts. At Cincinnati Timothy Day, Anti-Miami Democrat, ran a successful race for Congress on an Anti-Nebraska, anti-administration and anti-Jesuitical platform. Possibly other factors contributed in a minor degree to the Democratic debacle, such as Pierce's veto of a rivers and harbors bill generally popular in the West and a devastating drouth that injured farm crops in the summer of 1854 and made farmers aggrieved at the world. But their effects were lost in the larger currents that carried fusion to a victory greater than any ever achieved by Whigs or Democrats.

The election had been a political revolution unprecedented in the history of the State. Apparently Pierce, Douglas and Pope Pius IX had few friends in Ohio. On the Democracy, struck down in the midst of its prosperity, lay the ignominy of the defeat. But whose was the victory? The motley crew on the fusion ship could not answer that question themselves. The victors would have to fight it out. The events of the year 1855 were to settle that point as well as the even more vital one as to whether the revolution had run its course or had merely begun.

The Anti-Nebraska or "People's" movement of 1854, though comprising all sorts and conditions of voters, resolved itself after the election into two contending forces representing two divergent



ideas of the organization's destiny.<sup>54</sup> One could be called the Whig-Know-Nothing, or conservative element; the other, the Democratic-Free Soil, or radical antislavery element. The first believed in a moderate policy of opposition to slavery. It had opposed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise chiefly because a renewal of the slavery agitation would ensue to endanger the harmony of the Union. This element would be content with the restoration of the 36° 30' line west of Missouri and an end of agitation. It was willing to organize a new party on a national, rather than a sectional, basis by excluding any idea of abolitionism and including in the program of principles nativism, anti-Catholicism and perhaps other matters to the subordination of the annoying slavery question. It was antislavery, but not fanatically so, and was willing to admit the existence of other problems requiring public attention. On State issues it took no definite stand, but the conservative antecedents of the great majority made them hostile to Democratic taxation and banking policies and friendly to the business interests.

On the other hand, the Democratic-Free Soil element in the fusion movement, in contrast with the Whig-Know-Nothing group, was thoroughly and intensely antislavery. It was devoted to the principle of no further extension of slavery and looked toward eventual abolition. It was hostile to the introduction of nativism and anti-Catholicism into the party's platform lest they undermine its antislavery foundations. The spread of Know-Nothingism in the South was pointed to as proof that the secret society could not be sincerely antislavery, even in Ohio. How could a movement be genuinely liberal and humanitarian, they demanded, which proscribed individuals because of nationality and religion? While rather indifferent to State problems such as taxation and banking, the antislavery faction contained a number of radical Democrats whose Locofoco antecedents made them anxious that there should be no restoration of conservatism.

<sup>54</sup> Unless otherwise indicated the above account of the factional struggle in the fusion movement is taken from Eugene H. Roseboom, "Salmon P. Chase and the Know Nothings," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), XXV (1938), 335-50.

A comparison of the strength of the two groups of fusionists reveals that they were very evenly matched. Numerically the Whig-Know-Nothing element had a distinct advantage. Know-Nothing membership had grown from a total of nearly 50,000 in October, 1854, to 120,000 in February, 1855, while by June it had reached 130,000.<sup>55</sup> Allowing for exaggerations and inaccuracies, it is, nevertheless, evident that the secret order early in 1855 must have contained a majority of those who voted for Judge Swan the preceding year. This was offset in part by the fact that many Know-Nothings were more antislavery than nativistic and that few, if compelled to choose, would sacrifice compromise and harmony and chances for victory to uphold the basic principles of the secret order. On the other hand, the opposing elements, if numerically inferior, possessed leaders of national prestige in Chase, Wade and Giddings. Furthermore, the backbone of this antislavery element consisted of the former Free Soilers, who were fanatically devoted to their principles and who would wreck the fusion movement and endure defeat rather than see the cause turned to the worship of false gods. Thus the struggle was not an uneven one.

The fusion State convention did not meet until July 13, but the election of 1854 was hardly over before the warfare had begun. It centered around the candidacy of Salmon P. Chase for governor. Chase was the very embodiment of that hostility to the Kansas-Nebraska Act which had drawn the fusionists together. It was his voice that had first sounded the alarm through the entire North. Fusion could not have found a better representative of its salient principle. But Chase's candidacy had some serious drawbacks. He had been a Democrat and a bitter foe of the Whigs since the famous Democratic-Free Soil coalition of 1849. Many regarded him as a self-seeker and a political changeling who could not be trusted. Furthermore, his record on the slavery question had created a general impression that he was virtually an abolitionist. If he were nominated for governor, the fusion movement would be given a radical antislavery appearance not at all warranted by its actual

<sup>55</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Mar. 18, 1855; *Ohio Columbian*, June 13, 1855.

character. But the antislavery forces, for this very reason, regarded his nomination as a pledge of the good faith of the conservatives to the antislavery cause. They would have Chase as the candidate or secede from the fusion movement.

The conservative Whigs and Know-Nothings were not at first committed to the candidacy of any one man, but as the movement for Chase gained headway, the name of Jacob Brinkerhoff came to be suggested as the most formidable candidate to oppose him. Brinkerhoff had much to commend him. He had been a Democrat until 1848 and would appeal to that element in the fusion ranks. His reputed authorship of the Wilmot Proviso while in Congress and his support of Van Buren in 1848 were proof of his fidelity to the antislavery cause. He was a member of the Know-Nothing order, almost the only prominent man of Democratic antecedents to affiliate with it, and would thus appeal to the conservatives. Hence his availability was greater than Chase's. The antislavery leaders, with no regard for his past record, however, looked only at his Know-Nothingism and refused him any consideration. For them it was Chase or nothing.

The radicals assumed the offensive, and through the months preceding the State convention, called for July 13, this element kept up an intermittent fire on the machinations of the secret order. The Columbus *Ohio Columbian*, the Cleveland *Leader*, and the Jefferson *Ashtabula Sentinel* led the attack. E. S. Hamlin, Chase's lieutenant, edited the *Columbian*, which naturally was regarded as the former senator's mouthpiece. From the nature of his editorials it seemed that Hamlin was intent upon driving the Know-Nothings from the fusion movement and reorganizing it into an antislavery party along the lines of the old Free Democratic, or Free Soil group. Oran Follett, editing the *Ohio State Journal*, worked for compromise and protested to Chase against the lack of restraint shown by his followers, but the latter coldly replied that the antislavery men were only doing openly what the Know-Nothings were plotting in secret to accomplish.

But the way was being paved for Know-Nothing surrender.

Powerful as the Know-Nothings seemed to be in the spring of 1855, forces were already at work to sap their strength. In January another secret order had been launched, called the Know Somethings, whose chief purpose was to make the Know-Nothing order aggressively antislavery and at the same time less proscriptive so as to include the Protestant naturalized citizens in its ranks. It hoped to get control of New England, New York, Michigan, Wisconsin and the northern parts of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. In April its supporters claimed domination over thirty counties in Ohio and several thousand naturalized citizens as members. The Know Somethings would, as one man put it, "keep K. N'ism from doing mischief until the fever for secret societies is past." Members of the new order could tell of its existence and principles and their own connection with it, but not that of other members. Candidates outside the order could be supported.<sup>56</sup> This new organization was striking at the weakest principle of Know-Nothingism, its proscription of all foreign-born regardless of religious affiliations. By adopting an anti-papal attitude and admitting Protestant foreign-born, the new order was appealing especially to the Germans and undermining the nativism of the Know-Nothings. In June a national convention of Know Somethings was held at Cleveland attended by delegates from all the free states but California. Its declaration of principles made clear its antislavery character and strengthened the hands of that element in the older secret society. This was one of the factors in weakening the resistance of the Know-Nothings to antislavery demands.

The April municipal elections were a further sign of Know-Nothing weakness. Wherever the order operated as an independent party it lost ground over the election of the preceding fall. At Cincinnati it was discredited not only by the demagogic character of its candidate for mayor but by the actions of a Know-Nothing mob in destroying the ballot boxes in two German wards and engaging in riots against the foreign-born on election day. A reaction against

<sup>56</sup> Joseph Medill to Oran Follett, Apr. 18, 1855, in "Selections from the Follett Papers," V, *Quarterly Pub. of the Hist. and Phil. Soc. of Ohio*, XIII, 71-2.



nativism seemed to be under way generally throughout the State.

For this or other reasons concealed beneath their veil of secrecy the Know-Nothings had dropped any idea of independent action. Originally their State executive committee had planned that the State council, meeting at Cleveland in June, should name a complete ticket after a kind of referendum by the different lodges early in May. This ticket would then be forced on the fusion convention by a Know-Nothing majority. But this program was now abandoned in the face of the clamor of the antislavery press, though a slate was secretly agreed upon by the leaders, meeting informally at Cincinnati, to be supported in the fusion convention. The Cleveland meeting then openly voted against nominating a State ticket and held out the olive branch to the antislavery men by a surprisingly liberal platform. It formally organized the American party of Ohio but gave no indication of any intention to operate independently.

In this same month of June the Ohio Know-Nothings, in attendance at the order's national council at Philadelphia, gave further evidence of their antislavery views. When the majority voted to adopt a pro-southern plank on slavery, the Ohio delegation joined with other northern delegates in repudiating it. No one was more vehement than Thomas Ford, leader of the Ohioans, whose speech on behalf of the antislavery cause was acclaimed by the *New York Tribune* as "the great effort of the debate." Such praise from a quarter hostile to Know-Nothingism helped a little in convincing the Chase forces of the antislavery character of the secret order in Ohio, even though doubts were raised as to its sincerity. Certainly, since it had broken with the southern wing and had chosen an antislavery position, it would be far less likely to throw away chances for victory in Ohio by offending the radical antislavery elements.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the two rival divisions of the fusionists had been feeling each other out. Lewis D. Campbell, member of Congress from the Dayton district and an antislavery Whig of the Seward stamp, had become the real, if not the nominal, head of the secret order in the Northwest. He wrote Chase, ostensibly about some seed potatoes, but took occasion to suggest that the nomina-

tion for attorney-general or supreme judge might suit the latter in lieu of the governorship.<sup>57</sup> Chase's decided negative led to some frank statements on matters other than seed potatoes, but neither issued an ultimatum. After the Cleveland Know-Nothing meeting, Chase, seeing his own chances improving, adopted a conciliatory tone toward Campbell and inspired his organ, the *Columbian*, to defend the latter's antislavery record against attacks that had appeared in some of the Chase newspapers. Campbell was not entirely mollified, but he was too adroit a politician to let personal feelings interfere with chances for party success. The correspondence of the two men had revealed that both were anxious to avoid a rupture and that each would use his influence toward that end.

On Friday, the thirteenth of July, in the Town Street Methodist Church at Columbus, the Ohio Republican party shed the outworn garments of fusion.<sup>58</sup> Benjamin R. Cowen of Belmont acted as temporary chairman until the committee on permanent officers reported the name of a newly elected Congressman, John Sherman of Mansfield, to preside permanently. Lewis D. Campbell made a strong plea for harmony in the opening session. Then came the platform. Judge Spalding, veteran platform maker for both Democrats and Free Soilers in the past, reported from the resolutions committee five resolutions. The first resolution indorsed the principle of state rights against encroachments from any quarter—strange medicine for the Whig majority. The second stated these proposals: (1) the purpose of the people of Ohio to resist the spread of slavery; (2) their intention to render inoperative and void that portion of the Nebraska bill abolishing freedom in the territories. The third was a condemnation of the recent acts of violence and civil war in Kansas. The fourth demanded retrenchment in public expenditures, a thoroughly economical administration of the State government, a just and equal basis of taxation, and single districts for the election of members of the legislature. The fifth proposed a State central committee of five to correspond with committees of

<sup>57</sup> Eight letters between the two men are in the Chase MSS., Library of Congress.

<sup>58</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, July 13, 14, 1855; Joseph P. Smith, *History of the Republican Party in Ohio* (Chicago, 1898), I, 33-9.

other states to agree upon a time and place for a national convention. Spalding declared that the committee had adopted the resolutions with singular unanimity, but one person offering any objection. Giddings arose to state that he was the individual referred to, that he thought the resolutions should have gone further, but that he was willing to take them and hoped that they would be adopted unanimously. Campbell also spoke for them, and when the question was put there was no opposition.

Then came the nominations for governor. After the failure of an attempt to secure the withdrawal of the two leading candidates, Chase, Brinkerhoff, Judge Swan, Hiram Griswold and Samuel F. Cary were all presented for the governorship. Before the vote was taken Brinkerhoff was withdrawn. Judge Swan's name was used by the Franklin County delegation as a compromise candidate and a large part of Brinkerhoff's support went to him. The vote showed that Chase had 225, Swan 102 and Griswold 42. Thus Chase was nominated by a decisive majority over the combined opposition. Brinkerhoff was given the supreme judgeship unanimously, but there were sharp contests for the other places, only Francis D. Kimball, for attorney-general, winning his place on the first ballot. Of the nine nominees, Chase had been both Free Soiler and Democrat, Brinkerhoff, a Free Soil Democrat of 1848, Kimball, an Anti-Nebraska Democrat, the remaining six were Whigs. What was more startling was the fact that all but Chase were members of the secret order.

Chase was called before the convention and delivered a speech approving the platform and declaring his willingness to act with all men for the defense of freedom. Brinkerhoff, Thomas Ford, just nominated for lieutenant-governor, and some of the other nominees spoke. A motion to make all nominations unanimous was supported by Thomas Spooner, head of the secret order in Ohio, in a speech in which he declared that he would have added another plank to the platform but that all was probably for the best. Several others spoke and the motion was carried. A central committee of five men was appointed for the ensuing year, after which the con-

vention adjourned. In the words of the *Ohio State Journal*: "Thus closed the ever memorable Convention of the 13th of July, 1855. It is destined to be an era, a great landmark in the progress of the Republican sentiment of the free North. Its principles are certain to prevail, and the ticket nominated, will sweep the state."<sup>59</sup>

At first sight the spectacle of Chase heading a ticket of Know-Nothings might appear as a bad bargain for the straight-out anti-slavery elements backing him. But theirs was really the victory. They had made his nomination a *sine qua non* of the good faith of the Know-Nothings and had forced them to accept him, even though the latter nominally controlled the convention. Furthermore, the platform contained not a hint of the secret order's principles, in contrast with the action of the Indiana convention on the same day. Chase and his following were not bound to a single one of their opponents' principles, yet their own were written into the platform. As to the imposing array of Know-Nothing nominees, one may well question the depth of their devotion to the order, judging from their willingness to sacrifice it then and later. Opposition to slavery or desire for office had triumphed over nativism and anti-Catholicism. The shallowness of the secret society's roots in Ohio were never more evident. Indeed, it had been swallowed up in the antislavery movement and its force largely dissipated.

What part the influence of banks and conservatives generally had in quieting the elements is not clear. In a letter to Chase in May, James W. Taylor had charged that the banks would concede the governorship and much more for a friendly legislature and supreme court. The court nominees, Charles C. Convers, an old Whig, and Brinkerhoff, now completely dissociated from his former Democratic allegiance and hostile to Democratic taxation policies, could have no reason to be radical. Since a victorious State ticket would probably carry the legislature with it, it seems likely that those dissatisfied with Democratic economic radicalism had worked for conciliation and harmony in the convention.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> July 14, 1855.

<sup>60</sup> Roseboom, "Chase and the Know Nothings," 345.



Nevertheless, Chase was a bitter pill for Whigs and conservatives as well as for Know-Nothings. "Mr. Chase is rather a dark mixture, but you know that some of the 'gredients ain't so black, and its all a darned site better than the pain in the pantaloons," wrote "Whigton" facetiously in the *Ohio State Journal*, July 17. Such a view was widespread in the southern counties where most of the former Whig papers reluctantly came out for the ticket. Among these were the *Gazette* and the *Commercial* at Cincinnati where disaffection was greatest.

Some dissent, however, could not be kept down. At least six fusion newspapers refused to accept Chase while a large public meeting at Cincinnati passed a resolution for a mass convention at Columbus on August 9. Judge William Johnston, E. P. Norton and other old Whigs addressed it though it was under Know-Nothing, or American, auspices. A Columbus meeting, largely Whig in character, called Chase "a demagogue, a nullifier, a disunionist, an ultra abolitionist," who had contributed to spread slavery and who had no principles but mercenary ambition. It appointed a committee to correspond with other counties as to the propriety of running a third candidate. An anti-Chase meeting was also held at Chillicothe, while the Circleville *Herald*, which supported Chase, admitted that he was not acceptable to the people of the Scioto Valley. The Cincinnati *Times*, organ of the dyed-in-the-wool Know-Nothings, charged that they had been sold and betrayed by their leaders and that reorganization was indispensable. It urged that members hold local conventions, then a State mass convention on August 9. J. Scott Harrison, Cincinnati Congressman, was suggested as a possible candidate to run against Chase. Thomas Spooner, head of the order, tried to avert the danger of a bolt by a circular to the members defending his course and urging them to support Chase as a mark of good faith, since he had been fairly nominated by a convention controlled by Know-Nothings. The executive council also declared against a third ticket. Though doubtless helpful in reducing the damage from a third candidate, this did not avail in preventing the secession of a minority, and so a con-

vention of malcontents met on August 9 at Columbus as planned.<sup>61</sup>

On the eve of its assembling J. Scott Harrison declined to be a candidate, thus putting the members in a quandary as to the proper course. Nevertheless the convention went through with its program, though it proved to be disappointing in numbers. The platform repudiated the work of the thirteenth of July convention as that of a sectional party, demanded the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, upheld the principles of the "American" party, declared for reform in currency and taxation, denounced the Kansas outrages but refused to coalesce with a sectional party which had proclaimed its determination to resist the laws of the land. The last resolution named ex-Governor Allen Trimble for governor.<sup>62</sup> This was quite unexpected. Former Governor Trimble had been in retirement for many years and was past seventy, being far too old for an active campaign, but he was nominated in the hope that the prestige of his name would appeal to the older men as well as conservatives generally. He was not a Know-Nothing, but the seceders had no one of prominence in the order willing to lead a hopeless cause. Trimble accepted in the hope that some good could be accomplished by the use of his name and stressed national principles as opposed to sectional. He also declared for State aid to internal improvements and for good bank paper or specie paying banks.<sup>63</sup>

The convention did not nominate candidates for the other State offices but was willing to support the Republican nominees, as they were all Know-Nothings. Thus it was clearly an anti-Chase movement. Among the leading members were James and William Stanbery of Newark, Irad Kelley of Cleveland, Joseph Geiger of Columbus, and T. C. Ware and E. P. Norton of Cincinnati. It was largely old Whig in character, though the most prominent held aloof. Nearly all had supported the Anti-Nebraska movement of 1854, and even declared in their platform in favor of restoring the Missouri Compromise, but they would not support Chase whom they

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 346-7.

<sup>62</sup> Cincinnati *Dollar Weekly Times* Aug. 16; *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 9, 10, 1855.

<sup>63</sup> *Dollar Weekly Times*, Aug. 23, 1855.

regarded as an abolitionist and remembered as a bitter foe of Whiggery.

Perhaps twelve or fifteen papers, American or old Whig, supported Trimble, but for the most part they were not influential, and several died during the campaign, including one of the two in northern Ohio. Nevertheless, the movement was dangerous to Republican success. The nativists of Cincinnati and the conservative Whigs of southern Ohio generally, especially in the Scioto Valley, were numerous enough to defeat Chase and wreck the Republican party if they followed Trimble.

While the fusion movement was evolving into a new party, the Democrats were endeavoring to restore their shattered ranks. Their State convention had met as usual on January 8,<sup>64</sup> though there had been some feeling that a postponement would have been wiser in view of the threatened disruption of the opposition. Governor Medill and nearly all the other State officers had been renominated with little or no opposition, except that 69 delegates, apparently of Nebraska leanings, had voted for Samuel Medary for the governorship.<sup>65</sup> The platform merely restated the slavery plank of preceding conventions, thus avoiding direct mention of the Nebraska issue. The rights of the immigrant were upheld and sectional parties denounced, but the remaining resolutions were much like those of other years. Clearly the party did not intend to make slavery or the Kansas-Nebraska Act an issue, as such a course would prevent the return of the Anti-Nebraska element whose support was essential to success.

Since Democratic hopes depended largely upon the disruption of the fusion movement, every encouragement was given to the antislavery radicals in their attacks upon the Know-Nothings. Indeed, only by stressing the dangers and evils in Know-Nothingism could the wavering Germans be held faithful to the Democracy. Hence, there was a double reason to make the secret order the

<sup>64</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Jan. 9, 1855.

<sup>65</sup> A month later Medary bought back the *Ohio Statesman* after two years absence. It had been consolidated with the *Ohio State Democrat*, its party rival, May 23, 1854, and for a time went under the name *Ohio Statesman and Democrat*.

principal target for Democratic guns. An ally presently appeared to further this purpose in the form of the *Sag Nichts*. This was a secret order designed to uphold religious liberty and defend the rights of the foreign-born.<sup>66</sup> An unfriendly critic declared that it was principally "sore head Know Nothings and Free Thinking Germans," while a member explained in the New York *Tribune* that it was opposed to all forms of tyranny over the mind and body of man, including slavery and the papal power. Whatever its character elsewhere, in Ohio it was a branch of the Democratic party, working to counteract Know-Nothingism and hold the Germans loyal.

The unexpected harmony of the fusion convention, however, compelled the Democrats to change their plans. The State committee, which had called a meeting for the same date as the Republican convention, presumably to be ready for whatever contingencies might arise, was forced to return home with nothing accomplished. Democratic hopes of a breach in the fusion ranks had been blasted. But they speedily revived in a new form when the seceding Know-Nothings nominated Trimble in August. Now it became the policy of the Democrats to encourage this die-hard element of nativists. Chase might thereby be defeated and the new Republican party wrecked. Thus the Democratic campaign, at least in southern Ohio, was no longer directed primarily against the Know-Nothings but against Chase.

Indeed, the campaign of 1855 for all three parties revolved around Chase. Would the conservative Whig Scioto Valley or the Ohio River counties, adjoining slave territory, stand for such a candidate? And would the business interests of Cincinnati, threatened with a loss of southern customers to Louisville and St. Louis because their city harbored abolitionists, support the reputed chief of the abolitionists for governor? Democrats and "Trimblers" carried on a bitter warfare against Chase, going over every conceivable point in his record to prove his radicalism, and thus induce the

<sup>66</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Mar. 17, 1855.



conservatives to repudiate him.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, the Republicans, placed on the defensive by such tactics, found their best arguments in the banking and taxation policies of the recent Democratic State administrations. As the dissatisfaction of Cincinnati business interests with the existing taxation system was still pronounced, the Republicans could appeal to these conservatives with promises of relief in the form of lower taxes and better banking facilities.<sup>68</sup> Such an appeal had been successful in 1854, but then there was no Chase heading the Anti-Nebraska ticket. Elsewhere in southern Ohio the Republicans depended largely upon the loyalty of the Know-Nothings to a ticket composed, with one exception, of members of their order.

Chase was the issue in northern Ohio as well, but here the Republicans were on the offensive. His radicalism and his former Democratic connections were virtues in this area while upon the Democrats fell the opprobrium of a proslavery label. Governor Medill and James W. Taylor, a friend and advisor of Chase but a few months before, stumped the northwest with Know-Nothingism as their theme to counteract this feeling, while the Democratic *Kalida Sentinel* of Putnam County denounced the Cincinnati *Enquirer* in no uncertain terms for its southern trade argument and asserted that the Democratic party contained twice as many anti-slavery Democratic voters as the entire population of Cincinnati.<sup>69</sup> This did not make for party harmony but it helped hold antislavery Democrats faithful.

Chase conducted a vigorous campaign, speaking in 49 counties and at 57 different places, often accompanied by his Know-Nothing colleagues, without compromising himself with either foreign-born or nativists. Events in Kansas and the dangers of slavery extension were safe themes.

Though feelings ran high and there were fears of disorders, especially at Cincinnati, the election passed off quietly everywhere. Early returns from the larger cities and the old Whig counties,

<sup>67</sup> See especially Cincinnati *Enquirer* and Cincinnati *Times*, 1855 *passim*.

<sup>68</sup> See Cincinnati *Gazette*, 1855 *passim*.

<sup>69</sup> Columbus *Ohio Columbian*, Aug. 22, 1855.

mostly in the southern half of the State, indicated Chase's defeat though the remainder of the Republican ticket seemed safe. Even the *Ohio State Journal* conceded Medill's victory.<sup>70</sup> Then came a surprise in the form of an unexpectedly large vote for Chase in northern Ohio, especially from the former Democratic "backbone" counties. Medill's lead was overcome and final returns showed Chase winner by nearly 16,000 votes. Trimble had a total of 24,209.<sup>71</sup> The rest of the Republican ticket had almost the combined Chase and Trimble vote. The legislature was also Republican by large majorities in both branches.

"Ratification" meetings and jollifications were held all over the State, while Republicans in other states were almost as joyful. From places as far away as Massachusetts and Wisconsin came news of bon-fires and celebrations. In a public statement the Republican State central committee called it "one of the most signal civic triumphs ever achieved" and declared that "it must exert a moral influence that will *tell for freedom* wherever it shall be proclaimed."<sup>72</sup>

Yet it may well be questioned whether Ohio's governor-elect represented her correctly on the slavery issue. His nomination had been forced on the fusion convention as the price of the adherence of antislavery radicals, and the Know-Nothings had been forced to accept him or see the newly formed party wrecked. Spooner, Ford, Campbell and other leaders of the order had exerted all their influence to elect him, while conservative newspapers had supported him to end Democratic control of the State government. Even so, serious defections appeared to the extent of giving a third candidate 24,000 votes and leaving Chase in a minority by over 8,000 votes in the total. The State was clearly not as radical as its governor-elect.

Chase's Know-Nothing support was a two-edged sword. It cost him heavily with the Germans, particularly at Cincinnati, where all the efforts of liberal German leaders in his behalf were of slight

<sup>70</sup> Oct. 10, 1855.

<sup>71</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 27, 1855, for official returns. Chase had 146,659, Medill 130,789, Trimble 24,209.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 11, 1855.

avail. Up in northern Ohio the recession was marked over the landslide of 1854, but German losses here were less serious. The Know-Nothings saved the day in the southern counties, Chase actually carrying the southern half of the State, if Hamilton County be excepted. But the Cincinnati situation had produced a near-debacle for the Republicans. Medill had a plurality of 7,710 votes in the county, with Trimble in second place far ahead of Chase. All of Chase's chickens had come home to roost at once. Conservative business men voted against Chase, the abolitionist; the dyed-in-the-wool Know-Nothings could not accept Chase, the "foreignist"; the foreign-born repudiated Chase, the ally of nativists; old Whigs secured revenge on Chase, the quondam Democrat.

Yet the general results in the State gave ample cause for Republican rejoicings. The fusionists of 1854 were being welded into a powerful antislavery party with the State government now in their hands. Even more important were the effects on other states. In a year marked by Know-Nothing successes in Massachusetts and New York, and Democratic recovery in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Illinois, the Buckeye State had supplied the tonic needed to hearten the Republicans to keep up the battle. Defeat in Ohio might have crushed the new party which had as yet no national organization and was confronted all over the North with two powerful rivals. In control of the largest State of the West, the Republicans had avoided the danger of absorption by the Know-Nothings and the disruption that might have come had Chase been defeated at the polls.

## Slavery and Politics 1856-1858

FOR the new Republican party the winter of 1855-1856 was a testing time. Victories won in congressional and state elections had now to be justified by administrative policies and legislative acts. The Anti-Nebraska elements, if not the Republican party, controlled the national House of Representatives, while the large Republican majorities in both houses of the Ohio assembly and the party's control of the executive department left no room for doubt as to where responsibility should rest. The period for constructive policies had now arrived. The party was on trial.

The actions of the new Congress, with one exception, lay outside the field of Ohio politics, but that exception, the speakership struggle, had certain local reverberations that cannot be passed over. Lewis D. Campbell, Whig, Know-Nothing and Republican, now entering on his fourth term, wanted the speakership. His leadership of the House opposition to the Nebraska bill in 1854, his unblemished antislavery record and his vigorous campaigning for the Republican cause in 1855 were all in his favor. But his Know-Nothing connections and his adeptness as a politician raised doubts as to his sincerity among antislavery radicals, while the Trimble element disliked him for what they regarded as his betrayal of the secret order to the Republicans in the late campaign. Indeed, Campbell found himself assailed both as a "doughface" and as an abolitionist at the same time.<sup>1</sup> Only with difficulty could the Ohio delegation in Congress be brought to his support, while the refusal of a group of southern Americans, or Know-Nothings, to vote for him finally forced his withdrawal, though he had led the field on

<sup>1</sup> Campbell to Chase, Nov. 5, 1855, Chase MSS. (Library of Congress).



several ballots. Campbell had been aided by two important Ohio editors, Oran Follett of the *Ohio State Journal* and William Schouler of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, in his struggle for the speakership. But Follett was a candidate for the position of house printer and was backed by Schouler. Campbell came to feel presently that he had been induced to withdraw prematurely and against his own judgment to clear the way for Follett, since Ohio could not expect both honors. Follett was unsuccessful,<sup>2</sup> but the ill feeling created by the situation soon led to a complete break between Campbell and the two influential editors. When the former spoke on American principles at a Fillmore ratification meeting in the spring, he was practically read out of the party by the *Ohio State Journal* and the *Gazette*, despite his denial that he had actually indorsed Fillmore.<sup>3</sup> His later support of Fremont for President did not restore him to his former place in the party, nor did he ever recover the leadership that had been his in 1855.

In the Ohio legislature the Republican majority illustrated the dual nature of the party by its measures. Economic conservatism and antislavery radicalism worked hand in hand. Old Whig ideas reasserted themselves after several years absence in the person of Alfred Kelley, veteran Whig financier and legislator, and author of the banking law of 1845.<sup>4</sup> Under his guidance the new assembly passed a tax law exempting banks from taxation where their charters so provided and permitting deductions of debts from credits for all taxpayers.<sup>5</sup> A new general banking law was also enacted, subject, however, to a referendum at the October election, as the Constitution provided.<sup>6</sup> Governor Chase, now divested of the mantle of Locofoco radicalism, had suggested both measures. But the Democrats themselves had lost interest in their old principles. Stanley

<sup>2</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 20, 21, 1856; G. Bailey to Chase, Feb. 21, 1856, Chase MSS.

<sup>3</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Mar. 8, 28, Apr. 7, 18, 1856; Campbell to Schouler, Feb. 15, Mar. 10, 24, 30, 1856; G. W. Harrington to Schouler, Mar. 30; Schouler to Harrington, Apr. 10, 1856, Schouler MSS. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

<sup>4</sup> Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850*, 420 ff, of this series.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>6</sup> It failed to receive a majority of the votes cast at the election.

Matthews, Democratic leader in the senate, supported the new tax law in an able speech.<sup>7</sup> Conservatism was again having its day. On the other hand, the antislavery radicals were appeased by a resolution favoring the repeal of the fugitive slave law and by the passage of a habeas corpus act to hamper its execution, by a series of strong antislavery resolutions on the Kansas question, and by the reelection of Benjamin F. Wade to the United States Senate.<sup>8</sup> The Know-Nothing Republicans were strong enough to have defeated Wade, but his former Whig connections and the indorsement of the leading Republican papers overcame their reluctance, and the caucus selected him.<sup>9</sup> In the words of the hostile *Statesman*, the work of the legislature combined the "oft rejected measures of the old Whig party now defunct, and the impracticable and incendiary isms of the abolition faction."<sup>10</sup>

This was a presidential year and the business of nominating and electing a new president soon absorbed public attention to the exclusion of almost everything else. The Know-Nothings, or Americans, acted first. The State council, meeting early in January, was dominated by the antislavery element and chose four prominent Republicans as delegates and alternates-at-large to the order's national convention, though at the same time it resolved in favor of purely American party nominations for all offices.<sup>11</sup> At Philadelphia in February the Ohio delegation contributed to the break-up of the party's convention by the staunchness with which it held to its antislavery position. In fact, Thomas Spooner, a leading delegate and until recently head of the secret order in Ohio, was in communication with Chase as to the proper policy to pursue.<sup>12</sup> Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Ford, Spooner's successor as chief of the Ohio Know-Nothings, made a strong antislavery speech, though a New York delegate had tried to secure his expulsion from the con-

<sup>7</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Mar. 3, 1856.

<sup>8</sup> *Ohio Laws, Acts*, LIII (1856), 61-3, 237-8, 247.

<sup>9</sup> The vote of the caucus gave Wade 62, Hiram Griswold 12, Lewis D. Campbell 9, scattering 22. *Ohio Statesman*, Feb. 28, 1856.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 16, 1856.

<sup>11</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Jan. 4, 7, 1856.

<sup>12</sup> Spooner to Chase, Feb. 5, 1856, Chase MSS.

vention because of his Republican connections. On the question of adopting the platform, a virtual indorsement of popular sovereignty, the Ohio delegation voted in the negative, seventeen to three. When the platform was adopted, fifteen Ohioans were among the antislavery delegates who seceded from the convention.<sup>13</sup>

On March 19 the Know-Nothing State council met to pass upon the work of the national convention.<sup>14</sup> By a vote of 134 to 46 it indorsed the action of the Ohio delegation at Philadelphia, whereupon the minority withdrew and held a separate convention. Thomas C. Ware, anticipating a break-up, had secured from E. B. Bartlett, president of the national council, a charter constituting the Fillmore supporters the official American order in Ohio. This was now produced, Ware was chosen president, and Fillmore and Donelson, the Philadelphia nominees, were indorsed as the national candidates. It was almost entirely a southern Ohio group, twenty-three coming from Hamilton County alone. Meanwhile, the majority faction, at its convention, had repudiated the Philadelphia nominations and expressed its willingness to cooperate with any party pledged to resist the encroachments of slavery. This meant the continuance of the alliance with the Republicans, in fact, absorption into that party. The Ware organization, at conventions held in May and September, succeeded in filling its State and electoral tickets, though with some difficulty, and assumed its place as the official American party of Ohio.<sup>15</sup>

The Republicans were being organized nationally at the same time that the Americans were splitting into two camps. Two Ohioans were particularly active in bringing about the Pittsburgh preliminary convention on February 22, Alfred P. Stone of the Republican State committee and James M. Ashley, Chase's personal representative. The governor's friends, who predominated in the delegation, brought back glowing reports of his presidential prospects, though a few of the delegates, including Judge Spalding,

<sup>13</sup> *New York Tribune*, in *Ohio Statesman*, Feb. 28, 1856; *United States Gazette* in *Ohio State Journal*, Feb. 25, 1856.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 21, 24, 1856.

<sup>15</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, May 28, 29, 1856; *Ohio State Journal*, Sept. 10, 11, 1856.

were reported favorable to Supreme Justice John McLean. Thus two noted Ohioans loomed large as presidential possibilities.

Through the spring the contest for the Ohio delegates was waged, the radicals, largely of Free Soil, Democratic, and antislavery Whig extraction supporting Chase, those of conservative Whig origin favoring McLean. The division was quite like that of 1855 over the governorship, except that the Know-Nothing element was less conspicuous in the McLean camp. Indeed, Chase had two of the best known members of the secret order, Thomas Spooner and James H. Baker, supporting him. The meeting of the Republican State convention late in May resulted in a drawn battle.<sup>16</sup> No presidential preference was expressed and the six delegates-at-large to the national convention were left uninstructed. Three were definitely for Chase, but the others were apparently not committed to anyone. The district delegates, chosen at local conventions, were also divided.

When the Republican national convention met, the tide for General John C. Fremont had risen so high that Chase's friends felt impelled to withdraw him. McLean, with strong support outside the State, was in a better position. Such skilled eastern politicians as James E. Harvey, A. C. M. Pennington, John Allison, Thaddeus Stevens and J. Watson Webb seemed to have Pennsylvania and New Jersey safe for him with a possibility of some Seward support from New York.<sup>17</sup> Caleb Smith, William Schouler, Robert C. Schenck, Samuel Galloway and other prominent Ohioans were equally active in gathering votes for the judge. But Judge Rufus P. Spalding, McLean's manager, destroyed what chances his candidate had by withdrawing him before any ballots were taken. His authority was a letter from McLean authorizing such action if the different elements could be united better behind some other man.<sup>18</sup> There followed such an outburst of criticism, especially from the Pennsylvania delegation, that Spalding reversed his action in the afternoon just before the balloting began. But the damage could

<sup>16</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, May 29, 30, 1856.

<sup>17</sup> Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Life of John McLean* (Columbus, 1937), 146 ff.

<sup>18</sup> McLean to Spalding, June 14, 1856, McLean MSS. (Library of Congress).



not be undone. An informal ballot gave Fremont 359 to 196 for McLean, and the formal ballot quickly nominated the "Pathfinder." McLean received 39 Ohio votes to Fremont's 30 on the informal ballot but dropped to only 14 on the formal vote.

Fremont was probably a better choice for Ohio than either of her favorite sons. He had no antagonisms to live down and the two factions promptly fell in line in his support. The Germans found him acceptable and took part in a mass meeting at Cincinnati addressed by former Know-Nothings as well as Germans.<sup>19</sup>

The Democrats, meanwhile, were having troubles of their own. Their State convention, despite the opposition of some of the county newspapers, went on record in favor of popular sovereignty for the territories, thus finally abandoning the old "saddlebag" resolution on slavery that had appeared in every Democratic platform for many years.<sup>20</sup> But there was no indorsement of the Pierce Administration, nor was the President given any consideration as a candidate for another term. The convention was divided between Stephen A. Douglas and James Buchanan, three of the four delegates-at-large to the national convention being regarded as Douglas supporters, the fourth, Clement L. Vallandigham, favoring Buchanan. The Douglas men were less successful in the district caucuses where the foes of the Pierce Administration, usually members of the old Allen faction, checkmated them. The anti-Douglas newspapers conducted a bitter warfare against the Illinois Senator up to the meeting of the national convention in an effort to break down his support among the district delegates. The success of these tactics was apparent when the first ballot was taken in the national convention at Cincinnati. The Ohio delegates gave Buchanan 13½ votes, Pierce 4½, Douglas 4 and Cass 1. The "Little Giant" never received more than 6½ votes on any succeeding ballot, while Buchanan went up to 15 on the sixteenth ballot and received the entire Ohio vote on the next when he was nominated. Medary, who had supported Douglas, called former Governor William Me-

<sup>19</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, June 23, 24, 1856.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 8, 9, 1856; *Ohio Statesman*, Jan. 10, 1856.

dill "an old clucking hen" for keeping a careful record of the Ohio votes and threatening "a day of retribution" for the opponents of Buchanan.<sup>21</sup> Ill feeling died out, however, as the campaign began.

Buchanan was undoubtedly the best choice for the Ohio Democracy. His age and conservatism appealed to the old Whigs, now so necessary to Democratic victory, while his record was less offensive to antislavery men than that of Pierce or Douglas. The Republicans generally agreed that he was the most difficult Democrat to defeat.

The campaign was almost a repetition of that of 1855. The Democrats attempted to fasten on the Republicans the stigma of radicalism, calling them abolition fanatics, disunionists, and believers in Negro equality, and charging that they had kindled the fires of fanaticism in Kansas and that civil war had resulted in that territory. A like fate was in store for the Nation if they triumphed. In their ranks were "hair lipped Germans," the revolutionists of 1848, who were trying to bring on a revolution until "an agrarian level" was reached.<sup>22</sup> The Republican candidate, according to the campaigners, was a Catholic, a corruptionist and a bastard. Only the election of Buchanan, a conservative, pledged to a fair execution of popular sovereignty in Kansas, could save the Union. Such a campaign was designed especially to appeal to the old Whigs who held the balance of power in the State. Their reaction against Republican radicalism, it was hoped, would throw them into the camp of the Democrats, or at least would render indirect aid by strengthening the Fillmore movement. Undoubtedly a number of converts were made by these tactics, but they seem to have come chiefly from the Trimble supporters of 1855. Charles Anderson, friend of Henry Clay, and the Whig candidates for governor in 1850 and 1853, Judge William Johnston and Nelson Barrere, made Democratic speeches. Henry Stanbery was reported late in the campaign as turning from Fillmore to Buchanan. But Thomas Ewing, also claimed by the Democrats, refused to make any public state-

<sup>21</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, June 22. It gave the votes of the Ohio delegates by name.

<sup>22</sup> *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 16, 23, Aug. 6, 1856.

ment of his position. Nearly all the Whig lawyers of Cincinnati were claimed by the Democrats. Indeed, their chief gains among the old Whigs seemed to be at Cincinnati.

The Republican campaign played up the highly emotional theme of proslavery aggressions. Representative Preston Brooks's assault on Senator Charles Sumner, the sacking of Lawrence in Kansas, and the guerrilla warfare in that territory furnished excellent examples. Popular sovereignty was derided as a subterfuge for the advancement of slavery, while the annexation of semitropical regions for southern expansion was predicted if Buchanan won. Southern newspaper extracts furnished juicy material to substantiate charges that the Democrats were both proslavery and disunionist. Buchanan's public career was used as proof of his proslavery tendencies, while his early Federalism was not overlooked. Deserters joined the Republicans from the Democratic camp in the persons of Judge James Myers of Toledo, Judge C. B. Holt and P. P. Lowe of Dayton, Lucius Case and Daniel Humphrey of Newark, and others less well known. Judge Myers had been lieutenant-governor from 1853 to 1855 and had been defeated for re-election on the ticket with Governor Medill. Another equally prominent Democrat, who had joined the opposition since the last election, was Charles Reemelin, Cincinnati German leader. Reemelin had even attended the Pittsburgh convention of the new party in February. In Cleveland a Democratic Fremont club of 66 members was formed.

The American party followed a line of attack similar to that of the Democrats. Its primary purpose was Republican defeat. By attacks on that party's radicalism the Fillmore men hoped to draw off the southern Ohio conservatives and hold the balance of power in the State. The preservation of the Union was the theme of their orators. They drew into their ranks two of the Anti-Nebraska Congressmen of 1854, John Scott Harrison of Cincinnati and Oscar F. Moore of the lower Scioto Valley. Both, however, had virtually dissociated themselves from the Republican party at the time of the speakership struggle. Thomas Corwin, the veteran Whig orator, supported Fillmore until after the October State election when

he declared for Fremont. His explanation was the hopelessness of Fillmore's candidacy and the necessity of defeating the Democrats. Lewis D. Campbell, though aggrieved at his treatment in the Republican party, was a candidate for re-election to Congress and necessarily supported Fremont. Nearly all the leading Fillmore supporters had voted for Trimble in 1855 and had never been regarded as Republicans.

The friendliness of Democrats toward Americans presently led to Republican charges of a corrupt alliance between the two organizations. There was, however, no apparent foundation for this until just before the October election. Then M. A. Boling, Ohio representative on the American national council, publicly confessed in a signed statement in the *Cincinnati Commercial* that he and other prominent Americans had received funds from a number of leading Democrats to finance the American campaign. He cited names and the specific amounts contributed.<sup>23</sup> A letter to Boling from Wayne Griswold, Democratic candidate for the Board of Public Works, was offered as proof. In the letter Griswold suggested where Boling could get funds and stressed the importance of having Fillmore congressional and State candidates in the field. These revelations produced at once a flock of denials and counter-charges, reflecting on Boling's character as well as on certain prominent Republicans for using him as a tool. His confession may have been merely a Republican campaign device, sprung on the eve of the October State election. Boling was evidently untrustworthy, but it is clear that he was in the confidence of leading Democrats and that he received money from them either for his own or his party's uses. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* openly justified any Democratic assistance to the Fillmore cause on the ground that the American party was a branch of the "Union" party and therefore deserving such aid in its efforts to bring about Republican defeat.<sup>24</sup>

The campaign was the most spectacular and exciting of any since 1840. If the claims of the party press are to be accepted, 40,000

<sup>23</sup> Oct. 8, 1856.

<sup>24</sup> Oct. 15, 1856.



Republicans attended a Hamilton meeting and 50,000 assembled at Dayton, while 30,000 Democrats turned out at Tiffin and 160,000 (with five speakers' stands) at Dayton. The only spectacular Fillmore demonstration was held at Cincinnati and had as its central feature a meeting of two steamboats in the middle of the Ohio River, with young girls representing the states embracing as the boats were tied together. The Union was thus symbolically saved while cannon were fired from both banks of the river. Republican processions and meetings in the Queen City were disturbed by Fillmore and Democratic hoodlums, so Republicans charged, and on one occasion a hundred persons were struck by stones and other missiles.

The State and congressional elections came on October 14 and indicated the probable result in November. The Republicans were successful by pluralities of less than 20,000 over the Democrats, while the Americans had polled well over this number to hold the balance of power.<sup>25</sup> The Republicans had increased Chase's plurality of 1855 by some 3,400, as the American vote had fallen below that of the preceding year. Thirteen members of Congress were Republican and eight Democratic, the latter being aided in several instances by the presence of third party candidates. Perhaps the hardest fight occurred in the third district where Lewis D. Campbell defeated his old rival, Clement L. Vallandigham, by only eighteen votes. But his triumph turned to ashes later when the Democratic House unseated him on charges of fraud brought by his rival. Samuel Galloway's defeat in the Columbus district was a severe blow to the Republicans, bringing into Congress, as it did, the brilliant young Samuel S. Cox, a tower of Democratic strength. It is significant of the reaction against the Anti-Nebraska uprising of 1854 that the districts once represented by the four much maligned Nebraska Congressmen now elected Democrats.

The fourth of November came with abolitionist Oberlin praying and fasting for Fremont,<sup>26</sup> while the rest of the State awaited the

<sup>25</sup> Official returns in *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 27, Dec. 1, 1856. Two supreme judges, the State commissioner of common schools, and a member of the Board of Public Works were elected.

<sup>26</sup> *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Nov. 12, 1856.

outcome in ways less devout but with an interest equally keen. The favorable results for the Democrats in the October Indiana and Pennsylvania state elections made their partisans hope that Ohio might reverse its October verdict in November. Though their vote as well as that of the Americans showed a substantial increase, the Republicans were still ahead by a plurality of 16,623.<sup>27</sup>

At Cincinnati and up in the Western Reserve the Republicans had increased their vote over that of 1855. Elsewhere they had lost ground. In the metropolis, Fremont, unlike Chase in 1855, was a good second, though losing the county by 3,700. He had more than doubled Chase's vote. The Germans were turning to the antislavery party, now cleared of the taint of nativism, and three formerly Democratic German wards gave Fremont 2,284 to Buchanan's 2,058.<sup>28</sup> Chase's personal unpopularity in Cincinnati was also absent from the picture in 1856. Hence the Republicans were the gainers in Ohio's greatest city.

In the Western Reserve the excitement over Kansas and the slavery question drew out the largest vote that section of the State had yet cast, the Republican increase over 1855 reaching forty per cent. The pull of party loyalty in a presidential year had enabled the Democrats to recover much of their old strength outside the Reserve, and Buchanan came to that area 4,500 votes ahead of Fremont. But the Reserve's Republican plurality of more than 20,000 swamped the Democrats. Small wonder that the *Ohio State Journal* gratefully called it "the most enlightened and enterprising portion of Ohio."<sup>29</sup> The Democratic Cleveland *Plain Dealer* had another version for it: "Those old blue law, blue bellied Presbyterians that hung the witches and banished the Quakers, are determined to convert the people of this region into a race of psalm singers, using the degenerate dregs of the old puritans remaining here to drive the Democracy out."<sup>30</sup> The Western Reserve indeed furnished the key to Republican success.

<sup>27</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 24, 1856.

<sup>28</sup> Vote by wards from *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 5, 1856, quoting Cincinnati *Commercial*.

<sup>29</sup> Nov. 10, 1856.

<sup>30</sup> Dec. 3, 1856.

State issues re-appeared in party politics in 1857. The General Assembly became embroiled in a struggle over the validity of contracts made in 1855 by the Democratic Board of Public Works for repairs on the State canal system. A Republican investigating committee uncovered sufficient irregularities to furnish a basis for charging gross favoritism upon the board, while Democrats came to its defense.<sup>31</sup> However, the Republican majority split over the awkward question of a legislative repudiation of the contracts, and rumors were soon circulating that certain prominent Republicans among the contractors were pulling the wires to save their profits. Editorials in the *Ohio State Journal*, opposing repudiation and dealing tenderly with the contractors, were attributed to the same source. That party organ was now edited by William Schouler, formerly of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, and A. M. Gangewer, who had operated the *Ohio Columbian*, but the funds had been supplied in part by E. S. Hamlin, one of the canal contractors and once a political lieutenant of Governor Chase.<sup>32</sup>

In the end a compromise was arranged providing for a judicial solution if the contractors would not accept the State's terms in repudiating the contracts. The political effects, however, were bad for the Republicans. The issue appeared in the campaign of 1857 when Jacob Blickensderfer, Republican minority member of the Board of Public Works, who had acquiesced in the original contracts, was nominated for another term by the State convention. Several important Republican newspapers repudiated the nominee and a number of county conventions refused him their indorsement.<sup>33</sup> Unwilling to support the Democratic nominee for the Board of Public Works, reputedly friendly to the contractors, the bolters launched an independent candidate in the race. These divisions in the party endangered the success of the entire State ticket.

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter IV.

<sup>32</sup> Hamlin's connection with the *Journal* was suspected at the time, but Schouler denied that the former had a penny in it. A letter from Schouler to Chase in 1859 reveals that the funds for the purchase were supplied in part by Hamlin. Schouler to Chase, Apr. 9, 1859, Chase MSS. (Pa. Hist. Soc.).

<sup>33</sup> See especially *Toledo Blade* and *Cincinnati Gazette*.

But far worse than the canal contracts issue was the exposure of a great treasury fraud.<sup>34</sup> State Treasurer William H. Gibson was compelled to reveal a deficit of some \$550,000 in the State funds in June, 1857, when the approach of the date for the semi-annual interest payments on State bonds made concealment no longer possible. Gibson blamed his Democratic predecessor and brother-in-law, John G. Breslin, for the defalcation but admitted his own error in concealing the matter. Governor Chase immediately forced Gibson's resignation, secured funds to meet the State's obligations, and instituted an investigation to ascertain the facts. The political damage was tremendous. Democratic papers teemed with charges of Republican corruption and malfeasance, Gibson's story was ridiculed as an attempt to make Breslin the scapegoat, and the governor and assembly were attacked for their failure to discover such monumental corruption in the State government. The effect would have been devastating but for Breslin's own actions. That individual refused to make any public explanation of his conduct, and when faced with a grand jury indictment for embezzlement, fled to Canada. Such an apparent admission of guilt compelled his Democratic defenders to change their tactics and include both treasurers in their condemnation. This was not so effective but it was still embarrassing enough to their opponents whose position as a party of reform was badly shaken. Doubts could not be removed from the minds of many voters that Gibson was far from the innocent individual he pictured himself to be.

In this crisis Chase proved a tower of strength to his party. He had been pondering the question of a renomination, and though reluctant to withdraw from public office so far in advance of the next presidential election, was being advised by his closest friends not to risk his reputation in an effort to secure another term. While victory would add but little to his prestige, defeat would seriously impair his chances in 1860. But the Gibson-Breslin defalcation gave him no choice. He could not retire in the face of such disclosures

<sup>34</sup> Report of the governor's investigating committee, *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 17, 1857.



nor would his party permit him. His reputation for spotless integrity was its only salvation. Consequently the Republican State convention unanimously renominated the governor with a strong State ticket of new men, excepting only Blickensderfer.<sup>35</sup> The Democratic press did not hesitate to link Chase's name with Breslin's in connection with some of the latter's banking operations and to insinuate that the *Ohio State Journal*, now practically Chase's organ, had been purchased by its present owners with money secured from Gibson at Chase's suggestion. But these charges carried little weight. Neither party was prepared to make a very extensive use of the treasury frauds as an issue as both seemed more or less involved. The Democrats here had the advantage of offering a positive reform in a proposal for an independent treasury system, for most of the Breslin-Gibson difficulties were due to wildcat banking operations with State funds. In the end both parties found it easier to stress the familiar slavery issue, now in its Dred Scott phase.

Just when the Buchanan policy in Kansas seemed about to remove the vexatious slavery question from the political arena, the Dred Scott decision of the United States Supreme Court legalizing slavery in the territories came to the rescue of the antislavery party. The Republican press was a unit in bitterly attacking the decision that transformed the territories into "one great slave pen" and threatened "to cover our whole continent with slavery as the waters cover the sea."<sup>36</sup> The Republican legislature passed resolutions denouncing the decision and followed this with bills to prevent slaveholding and kidnapping in Ohio.<sup>37</sup> In May the State supreme court, in the Poindexter case, handed down an opinion that sending or bringing a slave into Ohio automatically made him a free man.<sup>38</sup> Four Republican judges concurred in this, Judge Thomas Bartley, lone Democrat, dissenting. This decision was, in effect, an

<sup>35</sup> Joseph P. Smith, *History of the Republican Party in Ohio* (Chicago, 1898), I, 69-73.

<sup>36</sup> *Ohio State Journal* Mar. 11, 1857.

<sup>37</sup> Ohio Laws, *Acts*, LIV (1857), 301, 170, 186, 221-222, 298.

<sup>38</sup> *Anderson v. Poindexter et al.*, *Ohio State Reports*, Critchfield, New Series VI, 475-727.

answer to Chief Justice Roger B. Taney's statement in the Dred Scott case that temporary residence in a free state did not affect the status of a slave.

Criticisms of the United States Supreme Court were presently broadened into a general attack on federal usurpations of power when United States Judge Humphrey H. Leavitt asserted the paramount authority of the federal judiciary over state courts in the Champaign County rescue cases.<sup>39</sup> In this instance a State judge had attempted, through writs of habeas corpus, to secure the release from federal authorities of certain citizens of Champaign County under arrest for violating the Fugitive Slave Law. Judge Leavitt overruled this action and brought down upon himself Republican denunciations of the centralizing tendencies of the United States Government under Democratic and proslavery control. This "New Federalism" led the *Ohio State Journal* to demand a constitutional amendment requiring a two-thirds vote of the Supreme Court to set aside state laws.<sup>40</sup>

At the Republican State convention both Wade and Giddings emphasized the illiberal and reactionary tendencies of the Democratic party, while the platform protested against the recent "vexatious prosecutions" of Ohio officials and citizens under federal writs and insisted that the lawful processes of state courts be executed without interference.<sup>41</sup> The Dred Scott decision was condemned as "anti-constitutional, anti-republican, anti-democratic, incompatible with State rights and destructive of personal security." Republican orators made campaign speeches in defense of state rights and personal liberties, and against proslavery Democracy, or "Federalism," now in control of all branches of the Federal Government and determined, they charged, to carry slavery even into the free North.

The Democrats, on their part, found one aspect of the Dred Scott decision quite useful for campaign purposes. Accepting Chief Justice Taney's argument against Negro citizenship, they pro-

<sup>39</sup> See the following chapter.

<sup>40</sup> July 21, 1857.

<sup>41</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 12, 13, 1857.

claimed themselves the defenders of white supremacy against the equalitarian ideas of their opponents. Henry B. Payne, of Cleveland, nominated for governor in August, emphasized this theme, while the party's platform indorsed the Supreme Court's decision as in agreement with the platforms of three Democratic national conventions.<sup>42</sup> The *Ohio Statesman* flung the charge of Negro suffrage and race amalgamation at the Republicans by drawing up a series of quotations from radical Republican speeches, writings and newspaper editorials. These, labelled as the "Congo Creed," were reprinted by party organs all over the State.<sup>43</sup>

A new factor was thrust into the campaign in the early fall when the great financial Panic of 1857 burst on the country. Hundreds of banks, railroads and business concerns were speedily involved and a period of financial demoralization ensued. Normally such a disaster is politically injurious to the national administration, but in this instance its immediate effects inured to the disadvantage of the opposition. The Democrats, traditionally anti-bank, took satisfaction in moralizing over bank failures and the evils of a paper currency, and stressed their State sub-treasury proposal as a protection for public funds in business crises. As the panic had been precipitated by the failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, a State depository, this argument was not without its appeal to the average voter.<sup>44</sup> Though most of the Ohio banks weathered the panic, the Republicans, nevertheless, bore the brunt of this general distrust of financial institutions, for they were at this very election submitting a bill to create additional banks to a popular referendum.<sup>45</sup> Its overwhelming rejection suggests the trend of public opinion.

Both parties realized that the election would be very close, and the candidates for governor made unusually strenuous stumping

<sup>42</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Aug. 6, 7, 20, 1857.

<sup>43</sup> Aug. 22, Sept. 3, 18, 1857.

<sup>44</sup> The *Statesman* claimed that the State had suffered heavy losses, which the Republicans were concealing until after the election. Aug. 25, 30, Sept. 1, 15, Oct. 1, 1857.

<sup>45</sup> *Ohio Laws, Acts*, LIV (1857), 140-60.

campaigns.<sup>46</sup> Not until several days after the election was it definitely known that Chase had won. His plurality over Payne was 1,503, one of the narrowest margins of victory in the history of the State.<sup>47</sup> Blickensderfer, for the Board of Public Works, lost to Abner L. Backus, Democrat, because of the presence of a third candidate, but the remainder of the Republican ticket was elected. The American party's gubernatorial candidate, Philadelph Van Trump, polled some ten thousand votes but failed to accomplish his party's chief aim, the defeat of Chase. This election marked the last appearance of a separate American organization. Many of the Fillmore supporters of 1856 had already joined the Democrats, as they were too bitterly anti-Chase to consider any other course, but a remnant in 1858-59 affiliated with the Republicans when Chase was no longer heading the ticket. As a consolation for losing the State offices, the Democrats had both branches of the assembly, but their opponents did not envy them their victory. With no United States Senatorship at stake and all the responsibilities of legislation to burden them, the victors had small reason to rejoice. What was of far greater moment was the party's recovery of much of the strength that had belonged to it before Kansas darkened the political horizon.

Yet within a month after the Ohio election, the Kansas issue was again before the country and the Democratic party faced a grave crisis. The Kansas constitutional convention, controlled by the pro-slavery element through a fraudulent election, refused to submit the completed state constitution to a popular vote. Only the slavery question was to be voted upon, and this in a form that insured the existence of slave property already in the territory, even if slavery were voted down. Such was the Lecompton convention's idea of popular sovereignty. At the ensuing election slavery was adopted

<sup>46</sup> The *Plain Dealer* (Oct. 28, 1857) claimed that Payne traveled 8000 miles, visited 68 counties, and spoke 54 times. The *Ohio State Journal* (Oct. 27, 1857) gave Chase credit for 3,714 miles, 43 counties and 46 speeches, each averaging two hours in length.

<sup>47</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 4, 5, 11, 1857. Chase had 160,568 votes, Payne 159,065, Philadelph Van Trump (American) 9,263. The legislative canvass in January reduced Chase's margin to 1281. Van Trump should be credited with 822 votes cast for "Peter Van Trump."



for Kansas, the antislavery men refusing to vote, and a new slave State was ready for admission to the Union. The territorial governor, Robert J. Walker, denounced the scheme and set out for Washington to place the matter before President Buchanan. But he found that timid old man under southern influence and ready to submit the Lecompton Constitution to Congress.

Ohio Democrats had been thoroughly committed to Walker's policy and received with alarm rumors that the President would not support him. The *Ohio Statesman* refused to credit such stories, defended Walker's measures, and when the Lecompton scheme was made public, protested vigorously against it, appealing to Congress to reject the work of the convention as violating the right of a territory to self-government. It even went to the extreme of characterizing the Lecompton Constitution as "the worst and most impudent document ever adopted by a legislative or constitutional body, in this country, as far as we know."<sup>48</sup> Such language from the usually cautious State organ of the Democratic party evoked a hearty chorus of approval from Democrats all over the State. Indeed, all over the North, the leading Democratic newspapers were already denouncing this perversion of popular sovereignty in similar terms. When Douglas threw down the gauntlet to the administration at the opening of Congress and assumed the leadership of the anti-Lecompton forces, he had on his side 49 Ohio Democratic newspapers with the list growing daily.<sup>49</sup>

However, there were a few dissenters. The leading Democratic paper of the Ohio Valley, the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, upheld the Buchanan Administration because, so it was charged, the editor expected to receive the Cincinnati postoffice plum and dared not do otherwise. The Dayton *Empire* at first seemed to be on both sides but ended by attacking the *Statesman's* position. The Newark *Advocate*, the Ashland *Union*, the Steubenville *Union* and a few other papers, largely controlled by federal officeholders or office-seekers, aided the administration in rather lukewarm fashion.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Nov. 22, 1857.

<sup>49</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Dec. 15, 1857.

<sup>50</sup> The *Ohio State Journal*, Nov.-Dec., 1857, quoted various Democratic papers on the question.

Nearly all these had been hostile to Douglas's presidential ambitions in 1856 and friendly to Buchanan. On the other hand, Joseph W. Gray, of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, risked his Cleveland post-mastership by opposing the President's policy.<sup>51</sup> There could be no doubt from the editorial expressions of opinion that the great majority of Ohio Democrats were anti-Lecompton.

When the new Democratic legislature met in January, it found itself at once under pressure to voice the feelings of Ohio for the benefit of the congressional delegation and the National Administration. Governor Chase suggested the desirability of such action in his annual message, but the Democratic majority felt no disposition to join the enemy in assaulting the President. The anti-Lecompton element was already embarrassed by charges of abolitionism and Black Republicanism, and wanted to avoid any appearance of commerce with the enemy. In their caucus, therefore, the Democratic members of the assembly framed resolutions protesting against the Lecompton Constitution but so drawn as to make it difficult for any Republican to support them. They included indorsements of Buchanan's administration and of the Cincinnati platform of 1856, declared the failure to submit the Lecompton Constitution to the voters unwise and unfortunate for the peace of Kansas, expressed the view that all constitutions of new states should be so submitted, and instructed the senators and requested the representatives to vote against the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution or any other not proceeding from the people.<sup>52</sup> These resolutions were rushed through both houses by the majority without opportunity for debate or amendment.<sup>53</sup> Of course, the Republican minority could not accept the indorsements of Buchanan and the Cincinnati platform, and thus had to vote against the entire group of resolutions. No Democrat opposed them, a further indication that the party in Ohio was anti-Lecompton.

The Democratic members of Congress were in a real dilemma. In one direction stretched the broad and pleasant highway of the

<sup>51</sup> Nov. 25, Dec. 16, 1857.

<sup>52</sup> Ohio Laws, Acts, LV (1858), 193.

<sup>53</sup> Ohio State Journal, Jan. 12, 14, 1858.

patronage and favor of the administration but with the chasm of political oblivion yawning at its end. In the other lay the straight and narrow path of obedience to their constituents with reelection as their possible reward, but deprived, meanwhile, of the spoils of office and bearing the stigma of disloyalty to the party's national administration. Senator George E. Pugh tried to effect a compromise but, failing in that, presented the resolutions of the Ohio legislature without comment. He sat silent while his Republican colleague, Wade, ridiculed the resolutions for their weakness and inconsistency, and sarcastically wondered whether he should vote according to the one indorsing the President or the one against Lecompton. Pugh's later course was marked by much indecision, his speeches and influence leaning toward the Lecompton side, while his vote was cast against the bill, as the legislature had directed. The eight Democratic members of the House divided, five voting consistently anti-Lecompton, two for the measure, while George H. Pendleton of Cincinnati voted in the early stages with the latter group only to join the former when the real test came.<sup>54</sup> Ohio furnished the anti-Lecompton leader in the House of Representatives in the person of Samuel S. Cox, serving his first term from the Columbus district. Before the measure had actually reached the House, Cox launched a vigorous attack upon it in the course of some remarks in criticism of the President's annual message. Thereafter no member was more active in support of Douglas's position than the brilliant and assertive young Ohioan. He was promptly punished by the administration by the removal of his close friend, Thomas Miller, from the Columbus postmastership.

In order that their representatives might realize the feelings of their constituents, the anti-Lecompton Democrats in the northern states held public meetings in most of the great cities and in many smaller places. In Ohio such demonstrations were held at Toledo, Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati, as well as in many

<sup>54</sup> The votes were tabulated from the *Senate and House Journals*, 35 Cong., 1 Sess. (1857-1858). The significant speeches were reprinted by the *Ohio State Journal* and the *Ohio Statesman*. Edward S. Wells, *The Political Career of Samuel Sullivan Cox during the Ohio Phase*, a master's thesis, Ohio State University, 1935, is a good study of Cox.



of the county seats. The Columbus gathering proposed a great State mass convention to meet at Columbus on March 10 in imitation of the action of the Indiana Democrats at Indianapolis in February. The response was generally favorable, and so on the above date an enthusiastic assemblage of Democrats from all parts of the State gathered at the capital to express their views.<sup>55</sup> Frederick P. Stanton, former secretary and acting governor of Kansas, was the leading speaker, but a number of prominent Ohio Democrats also addressed the meeting, including Henry B. Payne, the recently defeated candidate for governor, Stanley Matthews, formerly in the legislature from Hamilton County but now United States district attorney, General Joseph H. Geiger of Columbus, a recent convert from the old Whigs, and a number of other party leaders. Resolutions were passed condemning the Lecompton fraud and indignantly repudiating the Administration's attempt to make the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution a test of Democratic orthodoxy. Letters of sympathy were received from Robert J. Walker, former governor of Kansas, Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia and others.

The Lecomptonites also attempted some demonstrations, but they were generally less successful and open to the charge of being staged largely by federal officeholders. Meetings of administration men were held at Mt. Vernon, Cleveland, Columbus and a few other places. Such well-known Democrats as former Governor Wood, Colonel George Morgan, Judge John A. Corwin, and Samuel Medary espoused the Lecompton cause but they were clearly in the minority. Medary found himself in the strange company of his old enemies of the Allen faction. Once an ardent Douglas man, he had been won to the Buchanan Administration by the governorship of Minnesota Territory. When his tenure ended with statehood for the territory, he received the Columbus postoffice, made vacant by Thomas Miller's removal. Later in 1858 the veteran editor became governor of Kansas Territory. A son and a son-in-

<sup>55</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Mar. 11, 1858; *Ohio State Journal*, Mar. 10, 11, 1858.



law also held federal offices. The *Ohio Statesman* under different ownership had ceased to reflect his views.

Only the passage of the English bill by Congress prevented a complete break between the two factions. That measure resubmitted the Lecompton Constitution to the Kansas voters but disguised it as a vote on the question of accepting a land grant from the Federal Government conditional to admission to statehood. If it were rejected, statehood was to be postponed. The bill was intended as a compromise but was of questionable fairness to the free state men, and Douglas denounced it. However, enough anti-Lecomptonites voted for it to pass it. All the Ohio Democrats finally supported it, though Cox had his doubts and hesitated longest. He declared that the English proposal was "substantially" all that could be desired, and that it would restore harmony in the party and end sectional bitterness.<sup>56</sup> He was influenced by a letter from Robert J. Walker, former governor of Kansas, in favor of the bill. The investigations of the Covode committee of the House of Representatives in 1860 revealed that the administration had made overtures to Cox to support the English bill in return for promises of patronage.<sup>57</sup> The Republicans in the campaign of that year charged that he had sold himself for the spoils of office, but such an accusation could not be substantiated. Desire for party harmony could well explain his course.

Meanwhile, what had been the position of the Republicans in the Lecompton struggle? At first, they were willing to look on complacently while the Democratic party destroyed itself, encouraging the anti-Lecompton forces to assault the Administration and criticizing them when they evaded a direct attack upon the President himself. As the controversy became more severe the *Ohio State Journal* began to commend Douglas and Cox, and even to suggest that they take a more advanced antislavery position by joining the

<sup>56</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, May 4, 5, 1858; Samuel S. Cox, *Three Decades of Federal Legislation* (Providence, 1885), 56-8.

<sup>57</sup> *House Reports*, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., June 16, 1860, No. 648, pp. 226-40, 260-7, 277-80, 289-90, 304-11. Miller was restored to the Columbus postmastership only to be decapitated again in 1860!

Republican party.<sup>58</sup> It contended that a middle ground between North and South was an impossibility. The anti-Lecomptonites, however, were not ready to become Republicans. Popular sovereignty fairly carried out was their policy, and this might mean the adoption of slavery by a territory. The Republican position would not permit such a result. It was that party's purpose to make both "Nebraskaism and Lecomptonism henceforth impossible."<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, when the opportunity offered itself, the Republicans in Congress compromised their principles by voting for a popular sovereignty substitute for the Lecompton measure. This was done to aid the anti-Lecomptonites in defeating the administration, though it laid the party open to the charge of inconsistency and deviation from principle. However, good feeling between the anti-Lecompton Democrats and the Republicans in Ohio came to a sudden end when Cox and his colleagues supported the English bill. Party warfare was renewed, the Republicans denouncing the bill as a cheat and condemning the anti-Lecomptonites for surrendering to the Administration. All thought of cooperation was given up.

In another form, however, a reorganization of parties was being discussed. The possibility that the southern Americans and the Republicans could be drawn together into an "Opposition" party was being seriously considered by conservatives in both North and South.<sup>60</sup> This would involve the adoption of popular sovereignty as a basis of cooperation and an abandonment of the agitation against slavery. In Ohio the response of Republicans was generally unfavorable. They had fought both Democrats and Americans and had succeeded. Why compromise their principles and weaken their position for the sake of a national victory that might be theirs in any case? Only in Cincinnati, where local victories depended upon American aid, was there sentiment in favor of fusion. Here both the *Gazette* and the *Commercial* thought well of the idea. The *Gazette* even criticised the call for the Republican State convention

<sup>58</sup> Dec. 17, 21, 30, 1857.

<sup>59</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Mar. 8, 1858.

<sup>60</sup> Arthur C. Cole, *The Whig Party in the South* (Washington, 1913), 327-36.

on the ground that the Americans should have been included.<sup>61</sup> When the convention met, it reaffirmed the cardinal principles of the Republican party without specifying, however, just what they were.<sup>62</sup> It attacked the Buchanan Administration and invited men of all parties to join with the Republicans in "restoring the Government to its original purity." This appeal was followed up by the nomination of a southern Ohio conservative, William V. Peck of Scioto County, for supreme judge. If not an American, he was at least well thought of by that party. The other three places on the ticket went to straight-out Republicans. Thus, without compromising their position, the Republicans had made a shrewd bid for American votes. The Cincinnati *Times* (American) commented favorably on the ticket,<sup>63</sup> and with few exceptions the remnants of the third party fused with the Republicans. Thus the "Opposition" became a fact in Ohio without any formal arrangements and without any abandonment of principles by the Republicans.

While the Republicans were acquiring new recruits, the Democrats were attempting to restore order and discipline. The acceptance of the English bill in good faith by both wings of the party was the prime essential of harmony. Yet administration papers outside the State embarrassed the Ohio anti-Lecomptonites by proclaiming the compromise a Lecompton victory, while the President, in using the official ax on Postmaster Joseph W. Gray of Cleveland, editor of the *Plain Dealer*, contributed to further the ill will between the factions.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, when the State convention met, outwardly all was serene.<sup>65</sup> The resolutions committee, after long labor, produced a platform apparently satisfactory to both sides. The English bill was indorsed as settling the Kansas question; the Lecompton controversy was declared to be at an end and Lecompton no longer to be used as a test of Democracy; and

<sup>61</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, June 1, 1858.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, July 13, 14, 1858; Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 79-83.

<sup>63</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, July 20, 1858.

<sup>64</sup> *Plain Dealer*, June 16, 1858.

<sup>65</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, July 29, 1858.

confidence was expressed in the President. Judge Thomas W. Bartley, the only Democrat on the State supreme court, was renominated, and candidates for three minor State offices named.<sup>66</sup> The work of the convention was generally satisfactory, but the Lecompton issue would not down. The fault was due principally to the administration's hostility to Douglas in his campaign for reelection in Illinois. His followers in Ohio were resentful, and when the *Washington Union*, administration organ, attacked the Illinois Senator, the editor of the *Enquirer* and recently appointed postmaster at Cincinnati, James J. Faran, replied with some vigor, only to have the threat of official decapitation held over him. Since Faran had been a Lecomptonite, this was all the more surprising. Petty bickerings kept up between administration men and Douglas supporters throughout the campaign, especially over congressional candidates, and rendered success for the party unlikely, if not impossible.

The campaign was, on the whole, uneventful and uninteresting. It was saved from dullness on the Republican side by the re-entry of Thomas Corwin into politics. An old Whig by temperament and conviction, he had held aloof from the Republican party and had taken no part in politics save for a brief speech or two in 1856. Then he had preferred Fremont only because he regarded Fillmore's cause as hopeless in Ohio. What motives drew him back into the political arena in 1858 he did not disclose. Perhaps the idea of transforming the Republican party into a national conservative party attracted him. Certainly his speeches pointed in this direction. The welcome he received was not a hearty one, and it was only after a bitter struggle that he finally secured the congressional nomination in his home district. But for the fact that the district was overwhelmingly Republican, the dissensions created by his nomination might have defeated him.<sup>67</sup>

Corwin signaled his acceptance of the Republican faith by speaking from the same stage with Chase at a great Republican

<sup>66</sup> A new office, comptroller of the treasury, had been created by the General Assembly as a result of the treasury defalcations of 1857.

<sup>67</sup> W. H. P. Denny to Chase, Sept. 4, 1858, Chase MSS. (Library of Congress).



gathering at Columbus in September.<sup>68</sup> Corwin there acknowledged his belief in Republican principles on slavery but raised some doubts as to the sincerity of his repentance from conservatism by devoting most of his speech to the old Whig theme of a protective tariff. He made several Republican speeches of such a character that the more radical members of the party complained. He seemed willing even to admit slave states into the Union provided the people so desired at the time of their admission. Nevertheless, he was a distinct asset to the party in southern Ohio where conservatism ruled, and thousands of people turned out to hear again the eloquent voice of the "Wagon Boy" after years of silence.

Coincident with Corwin's return to politics was the retirement of Joshua R. Giddings. To the surprise and regret of most Republicans the veteran antislavery leader was turned down for renomination by his own district. He took his defeat philosophically, saying that he would go back to Congress and tell them he was to be succeeded by "a younger and abler man." In his case, however, retirement from office did not mean loss of interest or even influence in politics. He constituted himself a kind of guardian of the Republican shrine, and every attempt to desecrate it by compromise or concession won his immediate and unsparing denunciation. More than once, in the years from 1858 to 1861, Corwin felt the lash of Giddings. Indeed, the two men came to represent sharply opposing views as to the party's destiny, whether it should be radically antislavery and sectional or compromising and national. Each served to counterbalance admirably the extremes of the other.

The election was a complete Republican triumph. The party's State ticket had a majority of over 20,000, while fifteen of the twenty-one Congressmen were Republicans.<sup>69</sup> Of the eight Democratic members involved in the Lecompton struggle, six were candidates for re-election, but only Cox and Pendleton were successful. "So much for the leaden load of Lecompton," said the *Plain Dealer*.<sup>70</sup> Democratic prospects had indeed been blighted by the

<sup>68</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Sept. 1, 1858.

<sup>69</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 84-5.

<sup>70</sup> Oct. 20, 1858.

Administration's Kansas policy and a united and harmonious party turned into two angry factions, whose hostilities could hardly be kept down even in the face of the common enemy. After the election each blamed the other for the party's defeat and the warfare was renewed openly. The anti-Lecomptonites found consolation for Democratic defeat in Ohio in Douglas's great triumph over Lincoln in Illinois. They regarded it as a severe rebuke by the Illinois Democracy to the National Administration for its open hostility to Douglas during the campaign and prepared to make the "Little Giant" the choice of Ohio Democrats for the presidency in 1860. The Buchanan men were equally determined to prevent this. Thus factionalism seemed fastened on the Democratic party for at least two more years.

## The Triumphant Republicans

IN THE early months of 1859 it seemed that State problems might again assume their proper place as party issues in an election involving only State offices. The Democratic assembly wrangled over the question of the canal contracts, inherited from its Republican predecessor, and while refusing to restore the repudiated obligations, did pass an act to lease the entire State canal system to the highest bidder.<sup>1</sup> The law was too stringently drawn, however, and no bidders appeared.<sup>2</sup> The question of the future policy of the State toward its water transportation facilities might well have become a major party issue, had either party offered a definite program to the voters. But neither exhibited any willingness to grapple with the awkward problem and it slipped into the background.

The treasury frauds of 1857 also offered an opportunity for positive action, which the Democratic party was more willing to face. A special investigating commission reported to the second session of the assembly its version of the defalcations.<sup>3</sup> The report, a voluminous one, exposed the financial activities of three State treasurers in great detail, revealing an amazing amount of looseness and implicating all three in the misuse of the public moneys, though the threads were difficult to unravel and the evidence often "suspicions, hi[n]ts, and inferences," as one hostile critic put it.<sup>4</sup> It was impossible to discover where the missing funds had gone, the defaulting John G. Breslin himself being unable to account for much of it. Democratic papers inferred from the report that he had been to some extent the victim of supposed friends, including sev-

<sup>1</sup> Ohio Laws, *Acts*, LVI (1859), 243.

<sup>2</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 15, 16, 17, 1859.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 8, 1859. It was printed as a special "extra."

<sup>4</sup> *Cleveland Herald*, Mar. 14, 1859.

eral prominent Republicans, and that his Republican brother-in-law, William H. Gibson, through the Seneca County Bank, had become seriously involved with Breslin before he succeeded the latter in the office of State treasurer. Republican papers charged that the investigating commission's report was partisan and unfair, and came to the defense of Gibson as well as Breslin's Whig predecessor, Albert A. Bliss.

Meanwhile, the Democratic assembly in 1858 had passed an independent treasury act, according to its promise in the campaign of 1857, to divorce the treasury from the banks.<sup>5</sup> This law rather half-heartedly applied the hard money principle of earlier days to disbursements by State and county treasurers, but the Democratic party had lost interest in currency problems. Consequently the treasury issue was of only secondary importance in the campaign.

Democratic politicians, though professing opposition to any agitation of the slavery question, were not averse to using it when it suited their ends. The Assembly of 1858-1859, after repealing the radical, anti-fugitive-law measures of its predecessor, proceeded to lay the groundwork for an agitation of the "nigger" question, first, by considering, though not passing, a bill to prevent the immigration of free Negroes, and then, at its second session, by enacting the famous "visible admixture law."

The Constitution of 1802 had limited the right to vote to "white male inhabitants" of the State, leaving the definition of the word "white" to the courts.<sup>6</sup> In 1831, in the case of Polly Gray, the Ohio Supreme Court had ruled that persons having a proportion of Negro blood between that of a mulatto and a white person were to be considered as white. Later decisions built upon this precedent, and persons with a preponderance of white blood had been recognized as qualified voters. The Constitution of 1851 changed the "white male inhabitants" clause of 1802 to read "white male citizens of the United States," without, however, intending to alter the old

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>6</sup> The author is indebted to Walter Scott Perry, an assistant in the history department at Ohio State University, for a careful survey of the judicial and political aspects of the visible admixture law.



principle. Yet when Chief Justice Taney in the Dred Scott case held that no person of African birth could be a citizen of the United States, Democrats found a plausible ground for insisting that mixed bloods were excluded from the suffrage in Ohio.

The matter might never have come before the assembly but for the narrow margin of victory of the Republican State ticket in 1857. It was charged after the election that Chase had won by the votes of persons of African birth, and the Democratic assembly attempted to prevent a recurrence of this alleged illegal voting by the passage of the visible admixture law. Refusing to submit a constitutional amendment to the voters, the two houses passed a bill requiring election judges to challenge the vote of any person with a distinct and visible admixture of African blood, and to reject his vote if he proved to be wholly or in part of African descent. Doubtless the number of persons affected by the law was very small, but behind it lay the desire of the Democrats to fasten on the Republicans the stigma of favoring Negro suffrage and Negro equality, and thus to pose as the white man's party. In December, 1859, the Ohio Supreme Court, in the case of *Alfred J. Anderson v. Thomas Millikin and others*, declared the act unconstitutional as in conflict with long established judicial interpretations of the word "white," and as an overstepping of legislative authority, for the assembly had no power to give an authoritative construction of a provision of the State Constitution. The next Republican legislature then repealed the law.

Its use in the campaign of 1859 was chiefly for propaganda purposes, as it helped the Democrats in stirring up the race question. But it was overshadowed by another aspect of the ever-present Negro problem, a dramatic struggle between State and federal authorities over the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law.

Ohio's relations with her slave-holding neighbors over the problems of fugitives and free Negroes were a continual source of irritation. The Underground Railroad continued to operate, as in earlier decades, and abolitionists practiced direct action against slavery in defiance of the fugitive law. The growing sentiment

against the "slavocracy" after 1854 found a vent in the new Republican party and reduced the role of the dyed-in-the-wool abolitionists to that of creating a little thunder on the left. The antislavery party was actually a brake on extreme radicalism, but the problems of escaped slaves and kidnapped free Negroes furnished fuel for agitators and drove the Republicans toward a more radical course.

Although it is impossible to give a comprehensive account of all the cases involving interstate relations, a few examples may illustrate the complex nature of the whole question. Almost the first federal case under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 arose in Ohio. Washington McQuerry, a Kentucky runaway mulatto, was arrested at Troy, Ohio, where he had resided for four years, and brought before the federal circuit court at Cincinnati with Judge John McLean of the supreme bench presiding.<sup>7</sup> Despite the eloquence of James G. Birney, old Liberty party leader, in the slave's behalf, McLean remanded him back to slavery and thus upheld the hated act of 1850, while the denunciations of the abolitionists filled the air.

Far more complex were the amazing Peyton Polly cases involving a family of free Negroes residing in Lawrence County.<sup>8</sup> Although they had legally purchased their freedom from their Kentucky master, they were abducted by a professional slave dealer and sold in Kentucky, four of the eight children being purchased by a Virginian. The parents, who had escaped the abductors, petitioned the Ohio legislature, and Ralph Leete, Lawrence County prosecuting attorney, took up their cause. A decade of litigation followed involving the administrations of five governors and costing the State four thousand dollars. Attorneys employed by Ohio carried the cases to the Kentucky court of appeals and won a signal victory in the release of the four children in that state in 1853. Interminable delays characterized the conduct of the Virginia cases until at last

<sup>7</sup> Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Life of John McLean* (Columbus, 1937), 194.

<sup>8</sup> The author's attention was called to this case by Dr. William D. Overman, former curator of history of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, who collected the papers dealing with it from the Executive Records, 1849-1861, and the Charles Hammond Collection, in the Society's Department of Documents. Charles H. Lawrence, a graduate student in history at Ohio State University, prepared a seminar report for the author from these materials.

the four Pollys requested that proceedings be dropped. They preferred their new home in the mountains of present West Virginia, as they had become attached to their master and were satisfied with their condition in life. Strangely enough, the Polly cases attracted only mild public interest and had no political significance.

The problem of the transportation of slaves across Ohio was brought to a head by two incidents in 1854-1855. At Salem in August, 1854, a convention of the Western Antislavery Society, hearing that a slave girl was riding on a train passing through Salem, adjourned to the station, boarded the train and took the girl from the master and his wife.<sup>9</sup> She was renamed "Abby Kelley Salem," combining the name of a well known woman abolitionist and that of the town that gave her her freedom. Henry B. Blackwell, a Cincinnati abolitionist merchant, took part in the affair, which brought upon that city threats of a trade boycott by Memphis (Tenn.), home of the master. St. Louis and Louisville newspapers joined in denouncing Cincinnati for harboring abolitionists, and the Democrats made good use of the issue locally in the election of 1855.

The second case, in March, 1855, involved the freeing of a slave named Rosetta at Columbus. Her master, Rev. Henry M. Dennison of Kentucky, had sent her to Virginia across Ohio in charge of a friend.<sup>10</sup> Upon her application to the probate court at Columbus, she was declared free. The owner, through a federal commissioner, had her brought to Cincinnati by a United States marshal, but both the common pleas judge and the federal commissioner finally adjudged her free. Efforts of Chase, Rutherford B. Hayes and others led to the jailing of the marshal by the county sheriff for contempt. Judge McLean, however, upheld federal authority and released the marshal with a sharp reproof for the State authorities.

The next year Chase became governor and was confronted with the Margaret Garner case.<sup>11</sup> The Garners, a slave family fleeing

<sup>9</sup> Charles B. Galbreath, "Anti-slavery Movement in Columbiana County," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XXX (1921), 380-7. See also *Cincinnati Gazette*, Sept. 11, Oct. 21, 26, 31, 1854.

<sup>10</sup> Weisenburger, *McLean*, 194-5.

<sup>11</sup> J. W. Schuckers, *The Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase* (New York, 1874), 171-6.



from Kentucky, had been recaptured by a posse near Cincinnati, but only after forcible resistance, in the course of which Margaret Garner, in a frenzy, killed her ten-year-old daughter with a butcher knife to prevent her return to slavery. A Hamilton County grand jury indicted the woman and her husband for murder, while a United States commissioner ordered the return of all seven of the fugitives to slavery. An involved dispute over the custody of the accused ensued, but the federal district judge ordered the sheriff to turn them over to the United States marshal, who hurried them over to Kentucky before the probate judge could intervene. A requisition by Governor Chase upon the governor of Kentucky to return the "escaped" prisoners was honored by the latter, who saw an opportunity to establish a precedent for similar actions by Kentucky to recover slaves from Ohio. However, the owners sent the recovered slaves southward and they could not be located.

The Champaign County cases have already been mentioned in connection with events of 1857. In this instance both United States and State courts asserted their authority, the former in an effort to punish certain Ohio citizens and officials who had obstructed a deputy United States marshal and his assistants, the latter in an attempt to hold in custody the marshal and his posse for ignoring State writs of habeas corpus and for being allegedly guilty of assault with intent to kill.<sup>12</sup> The affair created much excitement but was compromised when Governor Chase secured an agreement with the National Administration whereby prosecutions were dropped on both sides. It resulted in a strong protest in the Republican platform of 1857 against oppressive acts of federal officials and a vigorous declaration in favor of upholding the sovereignty of the State and the processes of its courts. The Fugitive Slave Law itself, however, was not directly attacked, nor was it an issue in that campaign.

The crisis came in the spring of 1859 with the famous Oberlin-Wellington rescue cases.<sup>13</sup> An escaped slave, named John Price,

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 177-182; Benjamin F. Prince, "The Rescue Case of 1857," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XVI (1907), 292-309; *Ohio Statesman*, July 20, 21, 1857.

<sup>13</sup> William C. Cochran, "The Western Reserve and the Fugitive Slave Law," *Western Reserve Historical Society Collections* (Cleveland), Publication No. 101 (1920), 9-220, but especially 118-204. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *Cleveland Herald* have also been consulted.



who had been living for some time in Oberlin, was seized by a deputy United States marshal, accompanied by the agents of the master, and carried to the neighboring village of Wellington to be taken south by train. A group of irate Oberlin citizens, on learning what had transpired, came to Wellington and, aided by a mob there, effected the rescue of the slave from the officials. This occurred on September 13, 1858. A federal grand jury later indicted 37 citizens of the two villages for violating the Fugitive Slave Law, and they came up for trial in the United States district court at Cleveland in April, 1859. The cases of Simeon Bushnell and Charles Langston were taken up first, and after trials that aroused tremendous interest, both were convicted. The Ohio Supreme Court had been asked to interfere in the course of the proceedings but refused until sentence had been passed. Then, on a writ of habeas corpus, the prisoners were brought to Columbus and arguments heard, centering on the constitutionality of the national Fugitive Slave Law. The situation was a very delicate one. If the court decided against the law and ordered the prisoners released, the federal authorities would doubtless have refused to obey and a clash might have followed. How far each side was prepared to use force was a question, but excitement was running high in the Reserve, and only a regiment of soldiers, it seemed, could have prevented the forcible release of the prisoners if the State court so ordered. A great Republican mass meeting in Cleveland, while the cases were being argued, could easily have been led into mob violence, had the leaders so willed.

But the Ohio Supreme Court's decision, as handed down on May 30, upheld the constitutionality of the Fugitive Law by a vote of three to two. Judges William V. Peck and Josiah Scott from southern Ohio and Chief Justice Joseph R. Swan from Columbus agreed in upholding the law; Judges Milton Sutliff and Jacob Brinkerhoff from northern Ohio dissented.<sup>14</sup> Chief Justice Swan's dramatic conclusion to his opinion fitly expresses his own and his party's di-

<sup>14</sup> *Ex parte Simeon Bushnell and ex parte Charles Langston, Ohio State Reports, Critchfield, New Series, IX (1859). 62-260.* Separate opinions were given by four judges.

lemma, the age-old conflict between the individual conscience and public duty:

"As a citizen I would not deliberately violate the Constitution or the law by interference with fugitives from service; but if a weary, frightened slave should appeal to me to protect him from his pursuers, it is possible that I might momentarily forget my allegiance to the law and Constitution, and give him a covert from those who were upon his track. There are, no doubt, many slaveholders who would thus follow the impulses of human sympathy; and if I did it, and were prosecuted, condemned and imprisoned, and brought by my counsel before this tribunal on a *habeas corpus* and were there permitted to pronounce judgment in my own case, I trust I should have the moral courage to say, before God and the country, as I am now compelled to say, under the solemn duties of a judge, bound by my official oath to sustain the supremacy of the Constitution and the law, *the prisoner must be remanded.*"

Thus an attempt at nullification through judicial process failed. The conservatism of the State supreme court had asserted itself in the crisis. The question was now transferred to the political field.

The Democratic State convention met four days before the court's decision was handed down and took a conservative stand.<sup>15</sup> The party had been forced to accept the role of defender of the federal courts ever since the Dred Scott decision, though its history and traditions had pointed strongly in the other direction. The bank taxation struggle with the federal courts was not easy to live down, for in the session of 1859 the legislature had reverted to the party's old anti-bank position by passing another "crowbar" law. However, as the *Statesman* explained it, this would merely result in another appeal by the banks to the United States Supreme Court.<sup>16</sup> That body, it was argued, might reverse its position of several years earlier and uphold the State against the banks. The Democrats were only proposing to test the judgment of the court, not to resist it. The Republicans were the nullifiers and the advo-

<sup>15</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, May 27, 1859.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 11, 14, 1859.

cates of force. This explanation does not fit the text of the law nor the resolutions that preceded its passage, but the Democratic party was in a dilemma between its new-found conservatism and its radical traditions, and consistency went by the boards.

On the slavery issue it was clearly for upholding federal authority. Its State convention declared for the prompt and faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law, condemned the Republicans for disregarding the Constitution, and appealed to the people to rebuke their "wanton, factious, revolutionary designs" and thus avoid a conflict between State and United States authorities. The platform also took strong ground against any congressional interference for or against slavery in the territories, subject, however, to the Constitution of the United States. It favored the State independent treasury system and, as an afterthought, just before adjournment, added a bank taxation resolution. Rufus P. Ranney of Cuyahoga County, former supreme judge, and one of the party's strongest and ablest men, was nominated for governor by acclamation to head a well-balanced State ticket, including an old Whig for lieutenant-governor. The Democrats were thus ready to battle on conservative ground for the Constitution and the enforcement of federal laws.

The Republicans were swinging strongly toward radicalism and state rights. Dislike of the federal courts led the *Ohio State Journal* in February to uphold the Ohio Supreme Court's decision that banks could be taxed as other property, despite their charters, and to challenge the principle that bank charters were contracts.<sup>17</sup> This was a strange position for a paper that but a few years before had preached the conservative doctrines of old Whiggery and had rung with denunciations of Locofoco radicalism. When the Oberlin-Wellington cases were being tried at Cleveland, the usually moderate Cleveland *Herald* castigated the federal court and other federal officials for bias and unfairness, and charged that the federal judiciary was trying to subjugate the State.<sup>18</sup> This former Whig

<sup>17</sup> Feb. 10, 1859.

<sup>18</sup> April, May, 1859.

paper quoted with approval Jefferson's Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 and offered them as a justification for nullifying the Fugitive Law.<sup>19</sup>

The great protest meeting at Cleveland late in May drew some ten thousand people to hear Giddings, Chase, David K. Cartter, Reuben Hitchcock, Columbus Delano and other Republican leaders voice their disapproval of the acts of the federal authorities. Giddings even spoke of resisting tyranny by force after all legal means had failed, and the crowd roared its approval. On the other hand, Chase, burdened with executive responsibilities and presidential ambitions, was very cautious, urging recourse to the State courts and finally to the ballot box to end proslavery domination of the Federal Government. Letters were read from William Dennison, Thomas Spooner, Donn Piatt and others, expressing sympathy for the Oberlin prisoners. Resolutions exhibiting a pronounced state rights viewpoint and criticising the life tenure of federal judges were passed, while the federal court proceedings in the fugitive cases were criticised and steps proposed for the prisoners' defense.

On June 2, three days after the Ohio Supreme Court had handed down its decision in the Bushnell-Langston cases, the Republican State convention met at Columbus.<sup>20</sup> What course should the party follow? The conservative papers were already approving the decision and expressing their confidence in the fairness and integrity of the State supreme judges. The radicals, on the other hand, were bitterly disappointed. The highest State court had failed them by the vote of one judge, "a cowardly miserable sham conservative," said the *Akron Summit Beacon*.<sup>21</sup> This was the learned and able Chief Justice Swan, who had led the Anti-Nebraska movement in 1854 and was now a candidate for renomination. Despite his past record the radicals were determined to defeat him. Very likely they would have failed had not help come from a most unexpected

<sup>19</sup> May 6, 1859.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph P. Smith, *History of the Republican Party in Ohio* (Chicago, 1898), I, 87-94.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in *Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 4, 1859.



quarter. The Hamilton County delegation, anxious to have a Cincinnati on the State ticket to strengthen the party locally, after much debate decided to present the name of William Y. Gholson for supreme judge. Their argument was that Cincinnati, because of its size and important business interests, was entitled to representation on the highest State court. Gholson was a judge of the Cincinnati superior court and a man of high legal attainments. The radicals from the Reserve, seeing in this an opportunity to defeat Swan, offered to support Gholson if assurances were given of his hostility to the Fugitive Law. Some of the Hamilton County delegates, without Gholson's knowledge, expressed their opinion that his views would be found satisfactory to the Reserve, whereupon the radicals, ready to take almost anyone except Swan, agreed to support the Cincinnati candidate. He was nominated on the first ballot, receiving 207 votes to 140 for Swan, Hamilton County and a large part of southern Ohio joining with the north against the central and western portions of the State. The most radical and the most conservative sections had united to defeat Swan.

The other State offices attracted far less attention. That William Dennison would be named for governor was a settled fact when the convention met. Prominent both as a Whig and later as a Republican, he was radical enough to suit the radicals but not enough to offend the conservatives. He had served the party faithfully since its formation, for several years acting as chairman of the State central committee and manager of Republican campaigns. A successful attorney and railroad president, he was, on the score of availability, a good choice. As to the rest of the ticket, the victorious candidates of 1857 were renominated for three places, with new men for the auditorship and the Board of Public Works.

The convention adopted the platform by a unanimous vote but only after the resolutions committee had spent some five hours wrestling with it. John A. Bingham, Lewis D. Campbell, James M. Ashley, Corwin, M. H. Nichols, Benjamin Stanton, Giddings and others, the ablest men in the party, helped put it into shape. The radicals would have preferred a direct reference to the Oberlin cases

and an attack on the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Law, but the conservatives, led by Campbell and Corwin, vetoed this. Instead, the platform merely asked for the repeal of the unpopular act, condemning it as "abhorrent to the moral sense of the civilized world." It also demanded a reorganization of the federal judicial circuits to give every section a fair representation on the United States Supreme Court, and specified certain reforms needed in the machinery of the federal courts, an attack by implication on the fairness of the prosecutions in the recent fugitive cases. The platform also condemned extravagance and corruption in the National Administration, opposed the reopening of the African slave trade, indorsed the homestead bill, opposed any discrimination between native and naturalized citizens, and criticised the measures of the Democratic legislature. For the first time since the Republican party in Ohio was founded there was no mention of Kansas in its platform, nor a reference to the extension of slavery in the territories. Instead, it was now crusading against the Fugitive Slave Law and the federal courts, certainly the most radical position the party had yet assumed. Abraham Lincoln sent his disapproval from Illinois,<sup>22</sup> but the radicals were overjoyed. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," exclaimed Giddings exultantly, as he commented on the work of the convention. His party had caught up with him at last.

One other party held a State convention. The remnant of Americans was not satisfied with the extreme character of the Republican platform on slavery and the rejection of Judge Swan. Nor did they like the condemnation, by implication, of the recent action of Massachusetts in amending her constitution to require of naturalized citizens a two-year period of residence in the state before voting. Since this amendment had been passed by the Republicans of Massachusetts, it naturally aroused the resentment of the foreign-born against that party all over the country. The Democrats made such a wide use of this weapon that the Republicans were alarmed, and Chase hastened to write a letter to a group of Sandusky Ger-

<sup>22</sup> Daniel J. Ryan, *Lincoln and Ohio* (Columbus, 1923), 30-2, 111-5.

mans criticising the amendment and assuring the foreign-born that Ohio Republicans were against such discrimination.<sup>23</sup> The Republican platform had avoided direct mention of the Massachusetts amendment at the insistence of Lewis D. Campbell and other Americans after a sharp struggle in the resolutions committee, but its vigorous condemnation of discriminations was but little more palatable. The Cincinnati "National American Association" expressed its dissatisfaction with this and other policies of the Republicans by calling a State convention for July 26 in that city. Before it met, Congressman John A. Gurley and other Cincinnati Republicans in touch with Chase succeeded in winning over the influential Cincinnati *Times* (American) to a position of hostility to independent action. The convention proved to be thinly attended with the Cincinnati representatives the most numerous.<sup>24</sup> After a sharp debate and by a close vote it resolved against a separate ticket, though it passed resolutions condemning both major parties. The Cincinnati delegates were responsible for this action. They were concerned about fusing with the Republicans on the county offices and legislative ticket, and independent action would make this impossible. There was some dissatisfaction with the convention's negative position in other parts of the State, but nothing came of it.

The campaign centered on the Fugitive Slave Law. The leading Democratic papers expressed their hearty approval of the State supreme court's decision in the Oberlin cases, and after Swan's defeat, for renomination, fell with fury on the Republicans as nullifiers bent on destroying the independence of the judiciary in the course of their abolition crusade. Had their convention met after that of the Republicans, it is quite possible that Swan would have been offered the Democratic nomination for the supreme judgeship. As it was, the Cincinnati *Enquirer* suggested that their candidate, Judge Henry C. Whitman, withdraw in favor of the defeated chief justice.<sup>25</sup> Whitman curtly refused and the matter was dropped, but Democratic papers continued to play up Swan's

<sup>23</sup> Sandusky *Register*, in *Ohio State Journal*, May 6, 1859.

<sup>24</sup> Cincinnati *Enquirer*, July 22, 1859.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, June 15, 24, July 2, 1859.

martyrdom. They asked Gholson to resign and thus repudiate the bargain whereby he was nominated. When he did not respond, his record was subjected to careful scrutiny to find grounds for attacking him. The amazing fact was presently unearthed that he had been a slaveholder in Mississippi years before, and that he had sold, not emancipated, his slaves before removing to Cincinnati.<sup>26</sup> Letters from former neighbors were produced in proof of this. His son, a resident of Mississippi, had even written a letter to a newspaper in that state expressing the opinion that his father would uphold the Fugitive Slave Law and southern rights. This was gleefully reprinted by Ohio Democratic papers. Gholson made no reply to these charges but the attacks probably helped rather than injured him. Conservative Republicans, who were disturbed at Swan's defeat, found these statements about Gholson proof of his conservatism, while the radicals, having helped nominate him, could scarcely repudiate their own work. Some of the latter did become somewhat concerned over his silence, but only Judge Rufus P. Spalding, who had been one of the attorneys for the Oberlin prisoners, threatened to vote against him.<sup>27</sup>

The Republican campaign was focused upon the proslavery attitude of the Democrats in general rather than upon the Fugitive Slave Law alone. The latter was not unpopular in southern Ohio and caution had to be used. Republican speakers might declare for the repeal of the Fugitive Law but not for its nullification. Indeed, Corwin, in a widely quoted speech at Xenia, upheld the constitutionality of the act and the duty of submission to it, which brought down on his head the denunciations of Giddings. In a public letter to Corwin, Giddings declared the former's sentiments for obeying the law "anti-Republican, anti-Christian, opposed to the honor of our State, liberties of our people, and the rights of mankind."<sup>28</sup> He further stated that if the Cleveland prosecutions had been continued, the officers would have been hanged before their own doors. Such sentiments were well enough for the Reserve,

<sup>26</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, July, Aug., 1859.

<sup>27</sup> *Cleveland Herald*, Aug. 27, 1859.

<sup>28</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 2, 1859.



but they were very damaging in the conservative sections. The *Cincinnati Commercial* attempted to read Giddings out of the party, but the *Ohio State Journal*, though appreciating the embarrassment his course was causing, courageously defended the veteran anti-slavery leader and appealed to both radicals and conservatives to work together.<sup>29</sup> Corwin continued to make speeches in southern Ohio, and when at Ironton he seemed to deny the doctrine of "inherent rights," the "Lion of the North" again roared his disapproval, declaring that Corwin was worse than Chief Justice Taney in his doctrines.<sup>30</sup> But the old Whig orator was doing excellent work for the party in holding the conservatives in line and in abating the impression of radicalism created by the Oberlin cases and Swan's defeat.

The people of Ohio were treated to an unusual feast of oratory in this campaign. The two candidates for governor agreed to discuss the issues together, and seven different cities heard the joint debates.<sup>31</sup> Both were in the prime of life, Ranney being forty-five years old, Dennison forty-three, and both political veterans. Ranney had a great reputation as a stump speaker, while Dennison was better known as a campaign manager, but the latter seems to have held his own quite successfully.

Besides the gubernatorial candidates, nearly all the important figures of both parties in the State were on the stump, and help was also enlisted from Illinois in the persons of Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. Douglas spoke at Columbus, Cincinnati and Wooster, Lincoln at Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati.<sup>32</sup> Neither added anything to what he had advocated in the dramatic Illinois struggle of the preceding year, but Ohioans now had an opportunity to see the two champions at first hand. The *New York Times* paid Douglas the compliment of spending \$497 to have his Columbus speech telegraphed verbatim to the paper.<sup>33</sup> Douglas drew

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, Aug. 5, Sept. 2, 1859.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 7, 1859.

<sup>31</sup> The two state organs printed most of the speeches.

<sup>32</sup> Ryan, *Lincoln and Ohio*, 35-101; *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Sept. 10, 17, 18, 20, 1859; *Ohio Statesman*, Sept. 8, 13, 14, 18, 20, 1859; *Ohio State Journal*, Sept. 8, 17, 19, 20, 1859.

<sup>33</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Sept. 13, 1859.



# ELECTION *for* GOVERNOR

## 1859

Republican Counties Shaded  
Democratic Counties Unshaded

somewhat larger crowds but Lincoln's audiences were no less enthusiastic. The partisan Cincinnati *Enquirer*, though belittling Lincoln's Cincinnati speech as "trash" and marred by too many jokes, strangely enough, did ample justice to his appearance: "Hon. Mr. Lincoln is a tall dark-visaged, angular, awkward, positive-looking sort of individual, with character written in his face and energy expressed in his every movement."<sup>34</sup> In few elections have the people of Ohio had the issues more clearly and ably presented.

The Republicans won a complete triumph. The governorship and all the other State offices were theirs, as well as both branches of the assembly. Dennison's majority was over 13,000, while Gholson, despite the fight made against him, had nearly 12,000 more than Whitman for the supreme judgeship.<sup>35</sup> With the most radical platform it had ever adopted and without the aid of any fresh proslavery aggression or excitement as had been the case in other years, the party had won a complete and convincing victory. Its majority was 7,000 votes under that of 1858 in the face of an increased total vote, an indication that the Americans, conservatives and anti-Lecompton Democrats who had voted Republican the preceding year had not all remained faithful. But the majority of 1859, if smaller, was more to be relied upon and less likely to be disturbed by the opposition's cries of radicalism and disunion. It is true that many in the party looked to Corwin for guidance, rather than to Chase and Giddings, but these could be depended upon not to bolt, even if their wishes were disregarded by the more radical majority. The result in 1860 was clearly foreshadowed by the vote in 1859. Six successive victories had developed the fusionists of 1854 into a compact and powerful organization that could be relied upon all the more when the presidency was at stake.

Within a week after the October election of 1859 John Brown made his famous raid at Harper's Ferry. Had it come ten days or two weeks sooner, it might have exercised an important influence on the outcome. At is was, its political significance proved, in the

<sup>34</sup> Sept. 18, 1859.

<sup>35</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 4, 1859

long run, to be slight. For the moment, however, it seemed that the Democrats had at their disposal a piece of political dynamite. Brown's raid, they charged, was a direct result of Republican teachings. Seward, Chase, Giddings and their kind were the real authors of the Harper's Ferry affair, Brown merely putting into practice their doctrines of the irrepressible conflict.<sup>36</sup> Presently efforts were made to implicate Ohio Republicans directly in the conspiracy. Clement L. Vallandigham questioned Brown to discover his supposed Ohio connections but without success. United States Marshal Simeon Johnson made a special trip from Cleveland to Harper's Ferry to find out particularly how far the Reserve anti-slavery radicals were involved but had no better luck. Publication of the papers of Hugh Forbes, a former associate of Brown, revealed that Chase had sent money to the latter, but that this had occurred when Brown was involved in the Kansas struggle and had no connection with his later movements. Yet the Democrats made much of Republican sympathies for Brown and moralized over that party's fanaticism and the dangers to the Union inherent in it. Such was the line of argument later used in the campaign of 1860, but by that time it had become an old story and had lost most of its effectiveness. Politically, Brown's raid had been badly timed for Democratic purposes.

The Republicans, of course, made no attempt to uphold Brown, but they did belittle the importance of the affair and ridiculed the excitement of Virginia. They pictured the old man as a half-crazed fanatic, driven to madness by the wrongs he had suffered from the border ruffians in Kansas, and not responsible for his acts. As the Cleveland *Herald* expressed it, "Slavery drives John Brown to madness, and then hangs him for that insanity."<sup>37</sup> On the day of his execution, court adjourned at Akron, while at Cleveland that night 1,500 people gathered to hear such leading Republicans as Rufus P. Spalding, Daniel R. Tilden and Albert G. Riddle eulogize Brown.<sup>38</sup> Judge Tilden was an old friend of the dead hero and had a

<sup>36</sup> *Ohio Statesman* and Cincinnati *Enquirer*, Oct., 1859.

<sup>37</sup> Dec. 2, 1859.

<sup>38</sup> Cleveland *Herald*, Dec. 2, 3, 1859.



last letter from him which he read to the assemblage. At Cadiz, Harrison County, bells were tolled from noon to two o'clock on the day of the execution.<sup>39</sup> At Cincinnati the following Sunday German radicals and Negroes held a meeting in honor of the new saint.<sup>40</sup> But leading Republican papers were careful to distinguish between sympathy for the man and approval of his acts. The party contained enough radicalism to answer for without being burdened with John Brown.

The Harper's Ferry affair produced some political reverberations in the new Republican legislature.<sup>41</sup> Senator Richard A. Harrison of Madison County, a conservative Republican, introduced a bill, reputed to have been written by Thomas Ewing, to prevent the organization on Ohio soil of armed expeditions against another state. This was designed to lessen the tension between Virginia and Ohio over the Brown raid and to show the South that Ohio Republicans were not fanatics. But the bill received cold comfort from Harrison's Republican colleagues and from the party press. The *Ohio State Journal* argued that such a bill would create the impression that armed expeditions had been fitted out in Ohio, thus confirming Governor Wise's charges and placing the Republican party under suspicion. Although the *Cincinnati Gazette* came to the measure's support, the majority agreed with the *State Journal*, and the Senate indefinitely postponed it by a vote of 18 to 15.

Representative Robert Hutcheson of Madison, a Democrat, tried to accomplish the purposes of Harrison's bill by a set of resolutions condemning the John Brown raid and disavowing any wish to interfere with the domestic institutions of other states. These were to be sent to the governor and legislature of Virginia. When they failed to pass, the Democratic members sent them to Virginia as an expression of their own views. The legislature of that state replied with resolutions expressing its appreciation and condemning the

<sup>39</sup> *Cadiz Republican*, Dec. 7, 14, 1859.

<sup>40</sup> *Enquirer*, Dec. 6, 1859.

<sup>41</sup> George H. Porter, *Ohio Politics during the Civil War Period*, *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law* (New York), XL (1911), No. 2, pp. 26-38, covers the work of the assembly.

Republicans.<sup>42</sup> But the radical majority of that party was indifferent to Virginia censure.

Governor Dennison showed himself to be in sympathy with the Republican majority in the assembly when he refused to honor the requisitions of Governor John Letcher of Virginia for Owen Brown and Francis Merriam, two of the participants in the Harper's Ferry affair who had escaped to Ohio. The governor's reasons were that the requisition papers were defective in a number of respects, and in the opinion of the attorney-general would not warrant the arrest and return of the fugitives. Letcher was duly indignant at this reply and had the sympathy of the Ohio Democracy. But Dennison was unmoved. He also refused a Kentucky requisition for a man who had enticed a slave from its owner.<sup>43</sup> His reasons, or rather Attorney-General Christopher P. Wolcott's, were that such an act was not recognized as a crime by Ohio's laws, by the United States Constitution, or by the usages of civilized nations. Precedent was in his favor here, but this did not lessen the irritation of Kentucky or the clamor of Ohio Democrats. Thus neither Governor Dennison nor the legislature did anything to allay the distrust felt in the neighboring slave states toward the Republican party. On the other hand, the assembly did not add to their irritation by reenacting the personal liberty laws of the first Republican assembly. A conservative minority in the lower house joined with the Democrats to block such proposals.

But the John Brown affair and the return of fugitives were small matters on the political horizon compared to the politics of a presidential year. For in 1860 Ohio was a battleground for intra-party struggles that went far in determining the outcome of the presidential election. These, rather than the campaign, deserve to be stressed.

In the Republican party the pre-convention struggle followed the line of cleavage of 1859, radicals against conservatives. Since Ohio had three potential candidates, outsiders had little support in

<sup>42</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Apr. 12, 1860.

<sup>43</sup> Case of William Lago. *Ohio Statesman*, June 19, for correspondence of the two governors.

the State. It was, therefore, a contest of favorite sons, Chase, McLean and Wade. The first was an active candidate, the second passive, the third a dark horse. Indeed, Wade was not a factor until just before the national convention met and may be dismissed from a consideration of the contest for delegates.

Chase had been laying his plans for the presidential nomination ever since his defeat in 1856. Correspondence with influential men in other states, visits of James M. Ashley, his friend and confidential agent, to all parts of the North, activities of James A. Briggs, financial agent for the State in New York City, and inspired editorials in Ohio newspapers, especially the *Ohio State Journal*, were all directed to this same end.<sup>44</sup> Two serious obstacles were encountered, the candidacy of William H. Seward of New York and the distrust of the conservatives. If the Republican party was prepared to take a pronounced antislavery man as its nominee, Seward, with his excellent organization, money, influence and seniority in public life would seem to be preferred. Chase had little money, no organization outside his own State, and no Thurlow Weed to guide his destinies. On the other hand, he was under an even greater disadvantage in appealing to the conservative element, for he had been known throughout his career as an antislavery radical, while the old Whigs could not forget that he had once declared himself a Democrat. Since a conservative was needed to carry Pennsylvania and Indiana, these were weighty objections to Chase's candidacy. The difficulties of 1856 were repeating themselves.

Chase made every effort to overcome these obstacles. Since he could hardly hope to defeat Seward in an open fight, he followed the policy of avoiding a contest, wherever possible, hoping thus to win the friendship of the Seward men and secure their support in case their chief were withdrawn. To win the conservatives, particularly of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Chase avowed himself a practical man who believed in the necessity of a protective tariff, though his earlier convictions had all been in the other direction. When

<sup>44</sup> Donnal V. Smith, *Chase and Civil War Politics* (Columbus, 1931), 5-15. This appeared originally under the title, "Salmon P. Chase and the Election of 1860," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XXXIX (1930), 515-607, 769-844.

the charge that he was a free trader continued to be made, the *Ohio State Journal*, in a number of editorials, attempted to clarify his tariff attitude to satisfy the conservatives. But with all his efforts Chase found himself assured of but few delegates outside his own State. His chances, therefore, turned on the possibility of a deadlock in the national convention and his nomination as a compromise between Seward and the more conservative groups. To make this possible, the united support of his own State was a prime requisite. If he failed to secure it, he could hardly expect aid from the delegates of other states.

In securing the support of Ohio Chase encountered the opposition of the conservatives led by Corwin. The first skirmish occurred over the United States senatorship. Chase's friends had laid their plans to secure this prize for him before the legislature had been elected, and so successful were their efforts that a majority of the Republican members had been pledged to him in advance. The one danger was that enough conservatives might bolt the caucus and vote with the Democrats to postpone the election until the next session of the legislature in the hope that delay might work to their advantage. Most of the Republican papers opposed this scheme, and the legislature voted, though by the narrow margin of two votes in the House, to hold the election.<sup>45</sup> The Republican caucus had nominated Chase, giving him 51 votes, Corwin 8, Columbus Delano 10, John Sherman 1, Valentine B. Horton, 1.<sup>46</sup> One senator and four representatives bolted the caucus and supported Corwin at the election, though without his authorization. However, Chase was elected, receiving 76 votes to 53 for George E. Pugh, Democrat, and 5 for Corwin.

The next struggle came in the Republican State convention. Here Chase's wide popular support made itself felt and he was given the party's indorsement by a vote of 375 to 73.<sup>47</sup> The four delegates-at-large were all Chase men. But the opposition had concentrated its efforts in the district conventions and succeeded in

<sup>45</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Feb. 3, 1860.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 2, 1860.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 101-4.



electing several unpledged delegates who would not regard themselves bound by the action of the State convention. Since a divided delegation would be ruinous for Chase, the *Ohio State Journal* warned the delegates of the necessity for unity and expressed the belief that they would be found loyal.<sup>48</sup> Events, however, proved otherwise.

McLean was rather passive as to his candidacy.<sup>49</sup> He had been disappointed too often to be very sanguine of success. His popular support in Ohio was slight but his conservatism caused him to be regarded as far more available than Chase in Pennsylvania and other doubtful states. His friends felt that his name, brought forward after the convention became deadlocked, might win the prize. Corwin, once his rival, was now his chief supporter, but McLean also had powerful friends in other states in the persons of Lyman Trumbull of Illinois and Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania. He was seriously considered by the National Constitutional Union convention, ranking third after John Bell and Sam Houston on the first ballot, but his friends were not certain that nomination by that body, even if possible, would help his chances at Chicago. Yet the very conservatism that appealed to the Constitutional Unionists was McLean's weakness. The radicals distrusted him and feared that his nomination would be an "ice-berg upon the heart of the Republican party," as the *Ashtabula Sentinel* put it.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, McLean was in his seventy-sixth year. Was it wise to name so old a man for the responsibilities of chief executive?

When the Republican national convention met at Chicago in May, the Ohio delegates found themselves too divided and distracted to exercise any great influence.<sup>51</sup> Efforts were made in caucus to secure unity but all attempts failed. A test vote of the delegation resulted as follows: Chase 24, Lincoln 9, Wade 5, McLean 3, Seward 1, Bates 1, absent 3; for second choice, Wade 22, Lincoln 16, Seward 2, McLean 2, Bates 1. Corwin and two others defeated

<sup>48</sup> May 10, 1860.

<sup>49</sup> Weisenburger, *McLean*, 211-4.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in *Ohio Statesman*, Apr. 27, 1860.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 104-21; Cincinnati *Commercial*, May 16-21, 1860 (articles by Murat Halstead); Smith, *Chase and Civil War Politics*, 15-22.

a proposal to give Chase a united support. Next Delano and others suggested a unanimous vote for Chase for two ballots, then for that Ohioan who had the strongest support from other states. This would have meant a united vote on the later ballots for Wade or McLean, as each would be more strongly supported in other states than Chase. It is supposed that Wade's Ohio friends had secured promises of aid from Pennsylvania that would make him very formidable. The Chase men were indignant at this cavalier proposal to drop their favorite after a complimentary ballot or two, and a number of them threatened to vote for Seward rather than see Wade succeed by such tactics. No agreement could be reached, and the delegates voted their personal preferences for two ballots, after which several of the Chase men went over to Lincoln, who already had 14 Ohio votes.<sup>52</sup> When the third ballot had been taken but before the result was announced, it was seen that Lincoln was within  $21\frac{1}{2}$  votes of the nomination. Whereupon one McLean and three Chase delegates from Ohio changed their votes to Lincoln and brought about his nomination.

The result was a happy one for Ohio Republicans from every angle. Not one of the three Ohio candidates possessed the qualifications of Abraham Lincoln. Chase was an able man but did not have the confidence of the more conservative elements. Wade was temperamentally unfit to be president. McLean was too old and too conservative. Furthermore, the success of any one of the three would have left in its wake a trail of bitterness and ill feeling that might have endangered success in November. The nomination of an outsider was the best solution. Lincoln, a former Whig, satisfied the conservatives, while at the same time the Chase followers preferred him to almost any other possibility. Chase had campaigned in Illinois for Lincoln in 1858 and had the latter's gratitude and respect. After the nomination at Chicago Lincoln took care to let the Ohioan

<sup>52</sup> The Ohio delegates voted on each ballot as follows:

	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>
Chase	34	29	15
Lincoln	8	14	29
McLean	4	3	2

know, through mutual friends, of his high regard for him. Chase, naturally much disappointed at his own failure, nevertheless was not displeased that the nomination had gone to the Illinois lawyer. The Republican masses in Ohio were also well satisfied with the result. Lincoln's speeches in the State in the campaign of 1859 had gained him many admirers, so that his nomination created genuine enthusiasm in the party, regardless of former preferences. The Republican State convention, meeting in the "wigwam" of the Lincoln "Wide Awakes" at Columbus in June, heartily approved the national platform and nominees, and named a State ticket headed by Judge Brinkerhoff, candidate for re-election to the supreme judgeship.<sup>53</sup> The radicals showed their power not only in nominating Brinkerhoff, opponent of the fugitive law, but in forcing on the convention an indorsement of the radical State platform of 1859 after the resolutions committee had omitted it.

The struggle for delegates to the Democratic national convention came in the fall of 1859. The district conventions met early in December and the State convention in January. Douglas's speeches in Ohio in the campaign of 1859 doubtless gave momentum to his cause, though his opponents used his visit as an argument against him, charging that he was electioneering for himself, not for the party. In any case, his supporters were generally successful in the district conventions despite threats of removals held over federal officeholders who dared to support him. The Cincinnati postmaster, James J. Faran, suffered such a fate because the *Enquirer*, of which he was part owner, was too ardently for Douglas.<sup>54</sup> The State convention climaxed the work of the district conventions by indorsing the Illinois Senator as Ohio's choice by a vote of 242½ to 94½.<sup>55</sup> Four delegates at large were elected, all Douglas men, and the unit rule was imposed on the entire delegation to the Charleston (S.C.) convention. The Buchanan administration was not indorsed but certain of its measures were approved, a compromise arrived at after a sharp struggle.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 121-6.

<sup>54</sup> *Enquirer*, Oct. 25, 1859.

<sup>55</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Jan. 6, 1860.

Over the question of congressional protection for slavery in the territories, the rock on which the national convention split, the Ohio Douglas Democracy was a unit. Such a principle could never be countenanced by the party with any hope of success. The State convention had upheld popular sovereignty subject to the Supreme Court's interpretation but dared go no further. The *Statesman* proclaimed the unity of the Democracy of the whole Northwest on this principle and the nomination of Douglas, and appealed to Southerners to appreciate the sacrifices made by the northwestern Democrats in defending the South and in working to preserve the Union.<sup>56</sup> At the Charleston convention Henry B. Payne and Senator George E. Pugh played leading roles in upholding the northern cause, and the Ohio delegation voted as a unit against the southern platform and for Douglas for the presidency.<sup>57</sup> There was at least one administration man in the delegation, Judge Thomas Bartley, but he was suppressed by the unit rule.

The adjournment of the Charleston convention to meet at Baltimore in June gave an opportunity for an expression of opinion on the course of the Ohio delegates. Public meetings were held in several places to indorse their action and to urge them to stand firmly for Douglas. But some of the administration papers were hostile. The Chillicothe *Advertiser*, in the old Virginia Scioto Valley, charged that the Ohio Democracy had been too friendly to abolitionism in the past and had denied to the South equal rights in the territories.<sup>58</sup> This started a controversy with the *Statesman*, in which other papers presently joined, and the history of the years 1849-1850 was gone over to place the blame for William Allen's defeat and Chase's election to the United States Senate. The only result was to reopen old sores. The controversy is rather significant as William Allen's name was being considered in certain quarters as a compromise candidate for the presidency.<sup>59</sup> It is possible that

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 16, 28, Apr. 11, 18, 1860.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 24-May 4, 1860, Cincinnati *Commercial*, May 10-16, 1860 (Murat Halstead's account).

<sup>58</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, June 9, 1860.

<sup>59</sup> McGrane, *Allen*, 140-3.



the *Advertiser's* pro-southern position was inspired by this fact, for it was usually regarded as his organ.

When the northern Democratic convention at Baltimore finally nominated Douglas and the southern wing named John C. Breckinridge, Ohio Democrats had to make their choice. Most of them, judging from the tone of the press, supported Douglas. Not only the original Douglas papers but even some of the Buchanan administration organs took this stand. The Ashland *Union*, the Chilli-cothe *Advertiser* and the Mt. Vernon *Banner* yielded for the sake of harmony and party success.<sup>60</sup> But there were a few who dissented. The Cleveland *National Democrat*, supported by Federal patronage, led the way. Presently the number of Breckinridge papers included the Newark *Advocate*, the Steubenville *Union*, the St. Clairsville *Gazette*, the Stark County *Democrat*, and several other influential county papers.<sup>61</sup> The Democracy was definitely ruptured when the State convention, held to nominate candidates for presidential electors and three State offices, affirmed the national platform of the northern Democratic convention and indorsed Douglas.<sup>62</sup> Judge Lawrence W. Hall, former congressman, and one other delegate left the convention, were joined by a group of administration men, evidently in Columbus by a prearranged plan, and resolutions were passed for a State convention to name Breckinridge electors.

That convention, meeting August 7, named an electoral ticket and adopted the national platform of the Breckinridge Democrats.<sup>63</sup> It did not, however, name a State ticket. A number of leading Democrats took part, including former Governor Reuben Wood, Judge Hall, Dr. George Fries, John K. Miller, Colonel William D. Morgan, Judge Thomas Bartley, Judge John A. Corwin, United States Attorney George W. Belden, Charles B. Flood, and Charles Reemelin, German leader. The last named thus completed an eccentric political revolution from radical Democracy in 1850 to

<sup>60</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, June 30, July 1, 3, 7, 1860.

<sup>61</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, July 13, 1860, listed eight.

<sup>62</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, July 6, 7, 1860.

<sup>63</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 8, 1860

Republicanism in 1856 and to Breckinridge Democracy in 1860. This group was in no sense a proslavery one but an administration or conservative faction. In fact, the antecedents of several of the leaders were more antislavery than those of most of the Douglas supporters. Nearly all had been associated with the old Allen faction of the party and had opposed Douglas for the presidential nomination in 1852 and 1856. Thus the party split was a cleavage along the familiar factional lines of the fifties. But only a part of the Allen faction had joined the seceders. The support of Douglas, even though reluctant, by the Chillicothe *Advertiser*, the Mt. Vernon *Banner* and other former Allen papers gave his candidacy a strength that the old Medary, or Miami, faction had never possessed. Only a conservative minority, regarding Douglas as a sectional candidate and attached by office or ties of party loyalty to the Buchanan administration, supported Breckinridge.

One other electoral ticket, that of the Constitutional Unionists, also made its appearance. A State convention of some twenty delegates, the majority from Hamilton County, had met in April and elected delegates to the Constitutional Union national convention at Baltimore.<sup>64</sup> John Bell of Tennessee was indorsed for the presidency with McLean as second choice. After the nomination of Bell at Baltimore, a State convention was called to meet at Chillicothe on August 16 to name an electoral and State ticket. This Chillicothe convention indorsed the Bell-Everett national ticket and platform, denounced Republican efforts to nullify United States laws and the repudiation of Judge Swan, attacked Brinkerhoff and urged his defeat for supreme judge, and named candidates for presidential electors, attorney-general and the Board of Public Works.<sup>65</sup> The omission of a candidate for supreme judge was a virtual fusion with the Democrats in an effort to defeat Brinkerhoff for his vote against the Fugitive Slave Law. The Constitutional Union party in Ohio was nothing more than a revived remnant of the American party, which had been inactive as a State organization since 1857. Its chief

<sup>64</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Apr. 6, 1860.

<sup>65</sup> Ohio *State Journal*, Aug. 18, 1860.

strength was in Cincinnati where it had been cooperating with the Republicans for local offices. The only recruit of any prominence to join the group in 1860 was Lewis D. Campbell, former Republican Congressman, who proclaimed himself dissatisfied with the treatment of American principles in the Chicago platform of the Republicans.

The campaign resolved itself into a struggle between the Douglas Democrats and the Republicans, with the Breckinridge men conducting a kind of guerrilla warfare on the flanks of the former, while the Constitutional Unionists followed similar tactics against the Republicans. The Douglas party upheld the principle of non-intervention in the territories and attacked both Republicans and Breckinridge men as interventionists, each working to destroy the Union. Negro equality and disunion were held up as the fate of the country if Lincoln were chosen. Both Douglas and his running mate, Herschel V. Johnson, crossed the State in September and attracted large crowds to their meetings. Douglas spoke in Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati and a number of smaller places to more than 200,000 people, according to the *Statesman*.<sup>66</sup> The most notable speaker for Breckinridge was William L. Yancey of Alabama, who made a brilliant speech at Cincinnati late in the campaign, upholding the cause of the South.<sup>67</sup>

The Republicans adhered to the national platform of confining slavery to the states where it existed and showed little of the radicalism of the previous year against the Fugitive Slave Law. They charged both wings of the Democrats with the abandonment of popular sovereignty and the virtual advocacy of congressional protection of slavery in the territories. The Cincinnati *Commercial* was unorthodox enough to favor popular sovereignty, no longer burdened, it said, with the indorsement of Douglas.<sup>68</sup> The southern disunion threat was ridiculed as bluster and bullying. Elect Lincoln, declared the *Ohio State Journal*, and his victory "will effectually and forever silence this nauseating disunion twaddle that

<sup>66</sup> Sept. 29, 1860.

<sup>67</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Oct. 22, 1860.

<sup>68</sup> Mar., 3, July 12, Oct., 20, 1860.

has been spawned continually ever since the slavery question has entered fully into our politics.”<sup>69</sup> This proved all too true but not in the sense in which the Republican State organ meant it.

The tariff issue was incidental to slavery and disunion but it had its importance, especially in the iron regions of southern Ohio. A convention of iron masters, furnace men and capitalists of Ohio and Kentucky had been held at Portsmouth in February to urge upon Congress greater protection for the depressed iron industry.<sup>70</sup> These interests in Ohio and Pennsylvania came to the support of the Republican ticket because of its tariff position, though that plank in the platform was quite indefinite and was even claimed by the Democrats to represent their views. However, the Republicans seemed to be moving in the direction of Whig tariff policy and the iron interests were satisfied with this. Large majorities were given the Republican candidates in the iron and coal regions, areas in southern Ohio that were conservative on the slavery issue. The *Statesman* attributed the defeat of two Democratic congressional candidates to pressure put upon labor by the “Pig-Metal Aristocracy” and their allies, the coal dealers.<sup>71</sup> Elsewhere, the tariff was not significant and one important Republican paper even denied that protection was a party principle.<sup>72</sup>

That the Republican national ticket and platform were not regarded as radical in 1860 is evidenced by the position of Ohio’s most eminent conservative, Thomas Ewing, former Whig senator and member of two Whig cabinets. Ewing had taken no part in politics since 1851 but was induced to make a speech for Lincoln at a great Chillicothe meeting.<sup>73</sup> Avowing himself a man of no party, he declared his intention of supporting Lincoln. He knew the Republican candidate personally and he respected his ability. He would have preferred John Bell as the more experienced statesman but knew that the latter had no chance in Ohio. Ewing reviewed the

<sup>69</sup> Oct. 17, 1860.

<sup>70</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Feb. 9, 1860.

<sup>71</sup> Oct. 17, 1860.

<sup>72</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Mar. 13, Aug. 22, 1860.

<sup>73</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Oct. 2, 1860.



history of the Republican party and ventured some sharp criticisms of its radical tendencies in the past, pointing to its course in Ohio the preceding year as evidence. But he found hopeful signs of conservatism in the Chicago platform. It was worded temperately, it dealt with the tariff and other matters besides slavery and only its territorial plank was open to criticism. Thus, without avowing himself a Republican, Ewing virtually aligned himself with that party. His speech, circulated in pamphlet form, was an effective appeal to conservatives and old Whigs. Giddings was alarmed at this and other evidences of a revival of old Whiggery, and to offset it, wrote a public letter for the *Ashtabula Sentinel* in answer to Ewing.<sup>74</sup> But he wisely refrained from publishing it until after the election.

The homestead policy toward the public lands did not, in Ohio, play a very important part in the campaign. Buchanan's veto of a homestead bill was bitterly criticised by the Republicans, but the Douglas Democrats felt no responsibility for the National Administration and did not attempt a defense. The Breckinridge men paid no attention to the matter. In fact, the Ohio Democracy had supported the homestead policy for some time and did not feel inclined to repudiate it now. The positive indorsement of it by the Republicans in the Chicago platform helped solidify German support at Cincinnati but probably had no great effect elsewhere. The Germans of the metropolis would have preferred a more radical candidate than Lincoln, preferably Fremont or Chase, but accepted the nominee as a satisfactory choice. The older German communities, however, were not drawn from their Democratic allegiance. Only eight out of twenty-two German papers supported Lincoln and four of these were at Cincinnati.<sup>75</sup>

The October election was convincing proof that the Democrats were doomed. Brinkerhoff, whose radical decisions on the supreme court had aroused the bitter antagonism of the conservatives, was elected by a 13,000 majority over Thomas J. S. Smith, who was supported by both wings of the Democrats as well as by the Constitu-

<sup>74</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, Nov. 16, 1860.

<sup>75</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, July 23, 1860.

tional Unionists.<sup>76</sup> The *Ohio State Journal* could rightly call the victory "the most brilliant one ever achieved in the State by the Republican party."<sup>77</sup> If the united opposition could not succeed in October, what chance would it have in November with its vote divided among three parties? Nevertheless, efforts were made to arrange a Union electoral ticket in the hope of yet checkmating the Republicans. The Cincinnati *Enquirer* urged that such an arrangement be made and there was some response from the Breckinridge camp. But the *Statesman* frowned upon the proposal, insisting that the Douglas electoral ticket was regularly nominated and that all conservatives could unite in its support.<sup>78</sup> A meeting was held at Columbus to attempt fusion but lacked authority to act. Some of the Democratic committee and electors attended, but a quorum was lacking. So nothing was done. Defeat was probably inevitable in any case.

The vote in November was: Lincoln 231,610; Douglas 187,232; Bell 12,193; Breckinridge 11,405.<sup>79</sup> A united opposition would still have given the Republican candidate more than 20,000 majority. The success of the Republicans was due to the retention of their strength of 1859 and the addition of a conservative element, attracted by the conservative character of the presidential candidate and the tariff feature of the platform. The lower Scioto Valley and the mineral region to the east were now Republican, as was the city of Cincinnati and its county. The German wards had made the "Queen City" Republican. Indeed, Lincoln had a substantial plurality over Douglas without the vote of the Western Reserve. This had not been the case in any important election since 1855. Bell had not greatly affected Republican pluralities, his vote being negligible except in two former American centers, Hamilton and Belmont counties, which together contributed nearly two-fifths of his total. Douglas held most of the normal Democratic vote despite the Breckinridge defections. But this was not enough. The Demo-

<sup>76</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 128. Thirteen Republicans and eight Democrats were elected to Congress.

<sup>77</sup> Oct. 11, 1860.

<sup>78</sup> Oct. 16-23, 1860.

<sup>79</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Nov. 27, 1860; Smith, *Republican Party*, I, 128-9.

crats were already in a minority and had not only to hold their entire strength but to gain support from those conservatives who had either absented themselves from the polls hitherto or had given a reluctant support to the Republicans after the disappearance of the Americans. This they had failed to accomplish.

The Breckinridge support in the State was largely a matter of the location of a favorable press. It was somewhat scattered but the principal centers were among the conservative Democrats of eastern and east central Ohio. It was almost non-existent in the north-western and southern counties. It was clearly a conservative, not a pro-southern element.

## CHAPTER XIII

# The Civil War: The Years of Doubt 1861-1862

THE news that South Carolina was preparing to pass an ordinance of secession following Lincoln's election brought up the grave danger of civil conflict and produced in Ohio generally a decided anti-war sentiment. That Americans should have to fight Americans was unthinkable. On that point agreement was general. Yet the proper course to follow offered a difficult problem, and there was wide diversity of opinion and much uncertainty and wavering before the guns of Sumter settled the issue.

The jubilant Republicans were suddenly confronted with a danger they had hitherto minimized, and even derided as the empty threats of southern fire-eaters. Now with disunion actually at hand, they had no policy to meet it. The *Ohio State Journal*, taking a viewpoint strangely at variance with its later position, opposed the use of force to hold the Union together and even suggested a plan of peaceable secession. Its brilliant young editorial writers, William Dean Howells and Samuel Price, left largely to their own devices by Henry D. Cooke, the owner and nominal editor, showed surprisingly bad judgment.<sup>1</sup> Abolitionists of the Western Reserve expressed their approval of a dissolution of partnership with slaveholders, while conservative Cincinnati, for economic reasons, preferred peaceful separation to war and the disruption of business. The *Commercial*, believing compromise impossible and undesir-

<sup>1</sup> William D. Howells, *Years of My Youth* (New York, 1916), 220-2, 226-7.



able, was ready to favor a national convention to arrange for an end of the old partnership.<sup>2</sup>

In the Democratic camp were to be found, for the moment, the staunchest supporters of the Union. From the *Ohio Statesman* came strong editorials attacking the Republicans for advocating treason and making common cause with southern secessionists. The Union sentiments of Madison, Webster and Jackson were quoted and peaceable secession was denounced. The *Statesman* blamed Republican extremists for the enactment of laws by northern legislatures nullifying the Fugitive Slave Law. It urged the repeal of such laws and a policy of conciliation toward the South, but held that secession was unconstitutional and the sections must remain in one union.<sup>3</sup>

The immediate problem of the Democrats was to re-unite the Douglas and Breckinridge factions, and a State convention was held on January 23 at Armory Hall, Columbus, to restore harmony. No nominations were made for the coming election but resolutions were passed to serve as a basis for united party action and to embarrass the Republicans. While they emphasized devotion to the Union and obedience to federal laws, the resolutions favored a national convention to propose amendments to the Constitution to settle the disturbing questions before the country. The party was ready to accept any reasonable compromise. One resolution which seemed to recognize the right of secession and to question the right of coercion by the Federal Government caused a vigorous debate before it was finally worded to suit the majority. The statement as amended read: "and when the people of the North have fulfilled their duties to the Constitution and the South, then—and not until then—will it be proper for them to take into consideration the question of the right and propriety of coercion."<sup>4</sup>

The strongest Unionists were none too pleased with this but the convention ended the breach in the party and made compromise

<sup>2</sup> George H. Porter, *Ohio Politics during the Civil War Period*, *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law* (New York), XL (1911), 50-2; Daniel J. Ryan, *Lincoln and Ohio* (Columbus, 1923), 166-71.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Nov. 14-17, 1860.

<sup>4</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 53-5.

between North and South its basic policy. A Democratic-sponsored "union meeting" at Columbus on January 28 favored the Crittenden compromise.

The Crittenden proposal had as its chief provision the division of the territories between the North and the South along the line of  $36^{\circ}30'$ , with slavery to be forbidden north of the line and protected south of it. Senator Wade of Ohio was a member of the special Senate committee which was attempting to devise a satisfactory compromise, but he voted with the other Republican members against Crittenden's plan. The extension of slavery south of the line of  $36^{\circ}30'$  would have been a violation of the Chicago platform and Wade was standing with Lincoln in refusing to make concessions here.<sup>5</sup>

Corwin was chairman of a House committee of thirty-three which was also attempting to discover a solution for the sectional crisis. In the end, though the House passed a series of resolutions offered by the majority of the committee, they fell far short of meeting the situation. Corwin then proposed a constitutional amendment forbidding any amendment to the Constitution which would give to Congress the power to interfere with the domestic institutions of any state. Both houses adopted this proposal just before the end of the session but war came before the states could act upon it.<sup>6</sup>

In the Ohio legislature the session of 1861 was one long political wrangle with the Republican majority badly divided.<sup>7</sup> A conservative group often acted with the Democrats to checkmate the radicals, but refused to accept the more extreme Democratic proposals. Thus the personal liberty laws of 1857, which had been repealed by the Democratic Assembly of 1858-1859, were not revived. On the other hand, a law to prevent the kidnapping of free Negroes remained on the statute-books, though Democratic objectors contended that it was aimed at the Fugitive Slave Law. It was the only Ohio law that came under fire as a cause of sectional ill-will.

<sup>5</sup> French E. Chadwick, *Causes of the Civil War*, Albert Bushnell Hart, ed., *The American Nation: A History* (New York, 1906), XIX, 166 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 178-80.

<sup>7</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 55-70, covers the work of the General Assembly.

Governor Dennison, in defending his stand of the previous year on the extradition of certain fugitives from justice, declared in his message to the assembly that he lacked legal authority to comply with the requests of southern governors. This invited action by the Ohio legislature, but no agreement could be reached in either house. The radical Republicans backed the governor, conservatives thought Congress should define the offenses for which a fugitive might be delivered, while only the Democrats wanted the State to legislate.

Early in the session, after much effort, radical and conservative Republicans agreed in caucus upon a series of resolutions declaring for the preservation of the Union, the Constitution and the laws, and against the right of secession, but at the same time promising that Ohio would fulfill all her obligations under the Constitution and demand the same of every state. Senator Richard A. Harrison of Madison County offered the resolutions in the Senate, which passed them unanimously. Only a few Democrats in the House opposed their passage. The assembly also approved a Democratic proposal for a national convention of all the states. Substantially Ohio wanted to conciliate the South by redressing its grievances, especially over the Fugitive Slave Law, but not at the expense of the Union.

The sentiment for compromise developed as the session advanced and the assembly was favorable to the Virginia proposal for a peace conference at Washington. Much wrangling in both houses over the wording of Ohio's acceptance, the date of the convention, and the method of choosing the State's representation resulted in a decision to have the governor appoint the commissioners, with the consent of the Senate, with the instructions so stated as not to bind Ohio to any special terms of settlement in advance. Governor Dennison then appointed Chase, Reuben Hitchcock, Thomas Ewing, Franklin T. Backus, Valentine B. Horton, John C. Wright, and William S. Groesbeck as the State's representatives. Groesbeck was the only Democrat but the others represented all shades of opinion from conservative Whiggery to near-abolitionism. Wright's death created

a vacancy which the governor filled by appointing former Attorney-General Christopher P. Wolcott whose opinions on the extradition cases had made him unpopular with conservatives. Ohio's delegation was divided in its attitude toward the report of the conference, the majority supporting a proposal for a constitutional amendment to conciliate the South, but both Congress and the Ohio House of Representatives rejected the plan. The Corwin proposal, referred to earlier, was ultimately passed by both houses of the assembly, but this came after Fort Sumter and was the last feeble flicker of compromising conservatism.

Chase's resignation as United States Senator to accept the post of secretary of the treasury in Lincoln's cabinet precipitated a scramble among leading Republicans for his place.<sup>8</sup> Governor Denison was a logical choice and was at first the leading candidate in the balloting in the Republican caucus, but the conservatives were hostile and he could not quite get a majority. Columbus Delano of Mt. Vernon and Robert C. Schenck of Dayton, old Whigs who had been inactive in politics for some years, suited the conservatives but not the radicals. Since geographically the senatorship seemed to belong to southern Ohio, Valentine B. Horton of Meigs County, who had three times carried a close congressional district for the Republicans, had the strongest claims, but the radicals of the north found him unacceptable. The caucus finally named John Sherman of Mansfield, member of Congress since 1854 from a northern Ohio district, who had been the first choice of the Republicans for the speakership in the session of 1859-1860 and was acquiring a national reputation. Sherman's cautious, sober regularity suited the prevailing temper of the party but it had taken seventy-eight ballots to elect him.

The great event in Ohio's history in these troubled weeks was the passage of Abraham Lincoln across the State on the way to his inauguration.<sup>9</sup> He came from Indianapolis to Cincinnati, thence to Columbus, proceeded eastward to Steubenville and Pittsburgh,

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-1; *Cleveland Leader*, Mar. 18, 22, 23, 1861.

<sup>9</sup> Ryan, *Lincoln and Ohio*, 134-72.



turned back into Ohio to visit Cleveland, and then resumed his eastward journey to the national capital by way of Buffalo and Albany. He made numerous stops for brief speeches or platform appearances at many smaller places en route. It was an exhausting performance, for not only were the huge crowds insistent on hearing the President-elect's voice, but, whenever possible, they stormed past the guards and committees in attempts to shake his hand.

The formal reception at Columbus by the governor and General Assembly was followed by a mass reception in the rotunda of the State House which degenerated into a mob onslaught on the poorly protected guest of honor. William T. Coggeshall, State librarian, described the scene as follows:

"People plunged at his arms with frantic enthusiasm, and all the infinite variety of shakes, from the wild and irrepressible pump-handle movement to the dead grip, was executed upon the sinister and dexter of the President. Some glanced into his face as they grasped his hand; others invoked the blessings of heaven upon him; others affectionately gave him their last gasping assurance of devotion; others, bewildered and furious, with hats crushed over their eyes, seized his hand in a convulsive grasp, and passed on as if they had not the remotest idea who, what, or where they were, nor what anything was at all about. But at last the performance became intolerable to the President, who retired to the staircase in exhaustion, and contented himself with looking at the crowd as it swept before him." <sup>10</sup>

But this was not all. After a private reception at Governor Denison's home in the evening, he underwent another public display of appreciation at the State House "for ladies and their escorts." Cincinnati and Cleveland staged imposing parades, artillery saluted his arrival, flags and decorations added the patriotic touch and the crowds were of uncontrollable proportions.

Lincoln's speeches were brief, non-partisan and so cautiously phrased as to be almost non-committal. He gave no hints of future

<sup>10</sup> Coggeshall, *Journeys of Lincoln*, quoted *ibid.*, 151.

policies, seemed inclined to minimize the sectional crisis, and left many of his listeners with the feeling that he was unwilling to take the Nation into his confidence. Governor Dennison and other prominent Republicans were disappointed at Lincoln's remarks, and a body of German workingmen at Cincinnati, through their spokesman, tried to commit him to a definite stand by addressing him as the champion of free labor and free homesteads who would not compromise his principles. In reply, Lincoln begged them to excuse him from any commitments before his inauguration. "I hope at that time," he said, "to be false to nothing you have been taught to expect of me."<sup>11</sup>

Level-headed Rutherford B. Hayes, who served on the reception committee, saw the wisdom of Lincoln's caution. "He believes in a policy of kindness, of delay to give time for passions to cool, but not in a compromise to extend the power and the deadly influence of the slave system. . . . He undoubtedly is shrewd, able, and possesses strength in reserve. This will be tested soon."<sup>12</sup>

On Friday, April 12, 1861, the telegraph flashed the report that Fort Sumter had been fired upon. In the Ohio Senate, when the news was announced, "There was a solemn and painful hush, but it was broken in a moment by a woman's shrill voice from the spectators' seats crying 'Glory to God!'" Abby Kelly Foster, veteran crusader for woman's rights and the cause of the slave, had shouted "a fierce cry of joy that oppression had submitted its cause to the decision of the sword." Jacob D. Cox wrote afterward: "With most of us the gloomy thoughts that Civil War had begun in our own land overshadowed everything, and seemed too great a price to pay for any good; a scourge to be borne only in preference to yielding the very groundwork of our republicanism. . . ."<sup>13</sup> Over that bitter weekend Northerners recast the pattern of their thinking, abandoned the pathetic hope that compromises and evasions might do for a few years more, and ended the confusion and disunity of

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>12</sup> Charles R. Williams, ed., *Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes* (Columbus, 1922), II, 5-6.

<sup>13</sup> Jacob D. Cox, *Military Reminiscences of the Civil War* (New York, 1900), I, 2.

the preceding months with a whole-hearted response to Lincoln's call for volunteers.

For the moment party lines were blotted out, and if there were any who preferred disunion to bloodshed, they had the wisdom to keep silent. On Monday, April 15, came the call for troops. Next day the Ohio Senate on Governor Dennison's recommendation passed a bill appropriating \$1,000,000 "to provide for the defense of the state, and for the support of the federal government against rebellion." One senator voted against it, though two others protested against the war while supporting the appropriation. In the House Democratic leaders refused to permit immediate action and two days of debate and private consultation were necessary to secure their support. At last on April 18, the minority, led by former Speaker William B. Woods, later a justice of the United States Supreme Court, voted with the majority to pass the bill by a unanimous vote.<sup>14</sup> Patriotism had triumphed over party.

Of this appropriation, \$450,000 was to be used for arms and equipment for the militia, \$500,000 for carrying into effect any requisition of the President, and \$50,000 for a special contingent fund for the governor. Six per cent certificates of the funded debt amounting to \$1,212,039 were sold by the sinking fund commissioners and a special war tax was levied to supply additional funds. Most of the early loans were placed in the State. Before the session ended acts were passed to retain in State service additional troops beyond those necessary to fill the President's call, to appropriate \$500,000 for this purpose and \$1,500,000 for repelling invasion, to exempt the property of volunteers from execution for debt, to prevent the shipment of arms to the South, to organize the State militia, and to define and punish treason against the State.<sup>15</sup> James A. Garfield was the author of this last measure. With Ohio apparently put upon a war footing by these acts of legislation, the assembly adjourned on May 13. The rest of the task fell upon Governor Dennison.

<sup>14</sup> Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio in the War* (Columbus, 1893), I, 21-3.

<sup>15</sup> Ernest L. Bogart, *Internal Improvements and State Debt in Ohio* (New York, 1924), 204-5; Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 23-4.

Never had an Ohio governor been confronted with such momentous problems. A suave, well-mannered business man, experienced in banking and railroad management, Governor Dennison had satisfied the radical Republicans by his stand on the rendition of fugitives and was apparently assured of another term when the dogs of war were let loose. Utterly inexperienced in military matters and burdened with a group of subordinates not well chosen for such tasks as the emergency required, he was at once the victim of a wave of criticism which magnified his blunders and belittled his accomplishments. People saw in him only a cultured gentleman who wrote long messages in a verbose, stilted style and had neither the spirit nor the capacity to organize the State for war. His good manners and his unruffled disposition suddenly became liabilities. Action and fiery utterances suited the public temper; the governor appeared as a cautious business man, unable to adapt himself to situations outside the realm of his experience.

Yet the blunders were generally the work of his subordinate officials and the governor's chief fault was his failure to reorganize his administration at once. He assumed responsibility for the mistakes, knowing that they were the product of inexperience and hoping that they would soon be ironed out. His agent in New York, finding that tent poles could be secured immediately, shipped large quantities to Ohio at once. Arms and other equipment, more difficult to obtain, were to follow as quickly as possible. But Ohioans, expecting guns and munitions, saw thousands of tent poles being unloaded, enough to equip a large army, and raged at the governor for his incapacity. Stories like this, exaggerated in the telling, undermined confidence in a governor who probably met the emergency as well as any of his predecessors could have done.<sup>16</sup>

While thousands of young Ohioans, swept away by their patriotic enthusiasm, rushed to the defense of the flag with no thought of what lay before them, the decision was not always an easy one. Two brilliant young Western Reserve radicals, Jacob D. Cox and James A. Garfield, one thirty-two years old, the other twenty-nine, oc-

<sup>16</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 26 ff.



cupied seats in the Ohio Senate when the war began. Cox has left a moving account of the impact of war upon two thoughtful, sensitive, conscientious individuals, one a product of Oberlin and the son-in-law of its president, the other himself a college president and a lay preacher of the Disciples Church:

"Yet the situation hung upon us like a nightmare. Garfield and I were lodging together at the time, our wives being kept at home by family cares, and when we reached our sitting-room, after an evening session of the Senate, we often found ourselves involuntarily groaning, 'Civil war in *our* land!' The shame, the outrage, the folly, seemed too great to believe, and we half hoped to wake from it as from a dream. Among the painful remembrances of those days is the ever-present weight at the heart which never left me till I found relief in the active duties of camp life at the close of the month. I went about my duties (and I am sure most of those I associated with did the same) with the half-choking sense of a grief I dared not think of: like one who is dragging himself to the ordinary labors of life from some terrible and recent bereavement.

"We talked of our personal duty, and though both Garfield and myself had young families, we were agreed that our activity in the organization and support of the Republican party made the duty of supporting the government by military service come peculiarly home to us. He was, for the moment, somewhat trammelled by his half-clerical position, but he very soon cut the knot. My own path seemed unmistakably clear."<sup>17</sup>

On April 23 Cox was commissioned as a brigadier-general of the Ohio militia in federal service. Late summer saw Garfield also in the service as a lieutenant-colonel. Neither had occasion to regret the course he had chosen. Indeed, a military career was to be an asset of great value in the years to come, but at the time it involved sacrifices that promised little in the way of compensation.

Rutherford B. Hayes, a successful Cincinnati lawyer, might have used his age (thirty-eight) and dependent family as sufficient rea-

<sup>17</sup> Cox, *Military Reminiscences* I, 6-7.

sons for remaining in civil life, but his sense of duty ruled otherwise. "I would prefer to go into it," he wrote in his diary, "if I knew I was to die or be killed in the course of it, than to live through and after it without taking any part in it."<sup>18</sup> Not even the witches of Macbeth could have convinced him in 1861 that he had started on the road that was to lead straight to the White House.

As in other wars, the problems of organization and administration were at first overwhelming. Upon the State authorities fell the immediate burden as the Federal Government had to depend on the states for men and equipment at the outset. In Ohio there had been little preparation for war. Governor Chase had revived and reorganized Ohio's almost non-existent militia system by encouraging the formation of local companies and giving them legislative support.<sup>19</sup> Several cities boasted of well drilled, trimly uniformed military units, but the regimental organization was a paper one, and many companies listed by the adjutant-general had ceased to function. The State arsenal, when examined by Captain George B. McClellan and Senator (and presently Brigadier-General) Jacob D. Cox, revealed a few boxes of smooth-bore muskets, once issued to militia companies but returned rusted and damaged, a few brass six-pounder fieldpieces, worn out from firing salutes, a pile of mildewed harness and little else. "A fine stock of munitions on which to begin a great war," remarked McClellan.<sup>20</sup> Some of the companies were reasonably well armed, but the arsenal had no surplus.

From these companies came the first volunteers, the Cleveland Grays, the Columbus Videttes, the Rover Guards (Cincinnati), the Dayton Light Guards and others telegraphing to Columbus for orders. The first to arrive at the capital were the Lancaster Guards. By the morning of April 18 two Ohio regiments were organized from twenty militia companies. Without waiting for arms, uniforms or equipment from the Federal Government, in the early

<sup>18</sup> Williams, *Diary and Letters of Hayes*, II, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, I, 10.

morning hours of April 19 the first Ohioans were on their way to defend the national capital with their fists.<sup>21</sup>

The first problem of the State government was to provide for the hordes of volunteers who thronged to Columbus. Contracts to feed them were let at what seemed to be excessive prices, the adjutant-general accepted more troops than he could take care of, and complaints poured in to governor and legislature of incompetence and profiteering. In their haste to secure equipment and supplies State officials paid whatever prices were demanded and the tide of criticism swelled. In what amounted to a vote of lack of confidence the house of representatives asked the governor to remove the quartermaster-general and the commissary-general.<sup>22</sup>

The governor solved the problem in part by establishing a camp near Miamiville on the Little Miami Railroad not far from Cincinnati.<sup>23</sup> Camp Dennison, as it was called, helped relieve the congestion at Columbus, where Camp Jackson, at the northern edge of the city, was receiving the recruits. Shortly before this, he had relieved himself of the chief burden of handling military problems by appointing as commander of the Ohio troops Captain George B. McClellan, once of the regular army but now an official of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad with his residence at Cincinnati. Governor Dennison had preferred Major Irvin McDowell of General Winfield Scott's staff, a native of Columbus, but yielded to the pressure of some influential Cincinnati citizens, who wanted McClellan to have the place. Thus the young Pennsylvanian became a major-general of the Ohio militia. Within a short time, through the influence of Secretary of the Treasury Chase, Governor Dennison secured for McClellan a commission as a major-general in the regular army, a jump in rank so amazing that the former captain had difficulty in believing the truth of the report.<sup>24</sup>

Governor Dennison gave brigadier-generalships to two members of the State senate and to a militia officer, but only one of these,

<sup>21</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 25-8.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>23</sup> Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, I, 11-2.

<sup>24</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 32-4.

Jacob D. Cox, achieved any military fame. He also secured arms from the state of Illinois and by purchases in the East. Adjutant-General Henry B. Carrington accepted so many volunteer companies, however, that thirty of them had to be disbanded and others warned not to come to Columbus as they were not needed. Ohio alone could have filled the entire quota of 75,000 volunteers summoned by President Lincoln in his first call.<sup>25</sup>

Relations with Kentucky constituted a problem of the first magnitude at the beginning of the war. In January, 1860, the legislatures and state officials of Kentucky and Tennessee had been entertained by Ohio's governor and legislature for three days as a part of the celebration of the completion of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. Much was said on this occasion about the unity of the Ohio Valley and there was a general display of good will on both sides. This had been marred somewhat by the controversy that developed between Governor Beriah Magoffin of Kentucky and Governor Dennison over the Lago requisition case, which ultimately reached the United States Supreme Court.<sup>26</sup> However, with war impending, the Ohio executive sent Judge Thomas M. Key, a Kentuckian by birth and a Democratic member of the Ohio Senate, to convey his expressions of good will and his hope that the same devotion to the Union should animate both states and that all apprehensions of strife between the two states might be removed.<sup>27</sup>

Governor Magoffin's reply was conciliatory and he expressed his purpose to permit nothing to be done that would menace Cincinnati. But soon he suggested that Governors Dennison and Oliver P. Morton of Indiana assist him in arranging a truce between the Federal Government and the seceded states until Congress could meet in July to attempt some solution. Dennison's response was unsatisfactory, and on May 20 the Kentucky executive proclaimed the state's neutrality and her purpose to defend herself against invasion. Dennison soon afterward conferred with Governor Richard Yates of Illinois and Morton of Indiana and proposed the seizure

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-6, 42-3.

<sup>26</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 31-2, 40-1.

<sup>27</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 36 ff. for relations with Kentucky.



of the key Kentucky cities to protect the Ohio River and to stop Confederate recruiting in that state. Yates and Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois carried the proposal to Washington with the governors' indorsements, but President Lincoln did not act. He preferred to allow time for Union sentiment to ripen in the Blue Grass State. The summer elections vindicated his course. Legislature and members of Congress were strongly Unionist.

At the outbreak of the war Cincinnati was in a state of near-panic. Fears were rife that the defenseless city, the great manufacturing center of the West, might be seized by Confederate forces, particularly if Kentucky seceded. Governor Dennison hurriedly purchased some huge guns to be mounted on the hills above the Ohio and soon located Camp Dennison near Cincinnati to provide troops for the protection of the metropolis. Loyal citizens took matters into their own hands by stopping shipments of goods southward. This stirred Kentuckians to action and a delegation from Louisville arrived in the city on April 23 to protest. The mayor read a letter from Governor Dennison which stated that arms and provisions should not be seized when intended for a state that had not seceded as it might be used to create a popular feeling in favor of secession where it did not exist. The Kentuckians were satisfied but a large meeting of Cincinnati citizens a few days later proclaimed as traitors any men who would ship provisions or arms to a person or state not openly loyal. "Home Guards" were organized to stop contraband trade.<sup>28</sup>

Cincinnati showed little evidence of southern leanings once the war began. The city's population contained but a small minority of southern birth, and its industrial development and railroad connections had made the lower Mississippi Valley business less important than in the past.<sup>29</sup> The war was injurious but not disastrous, and in any case the city wanted the Union preserved to insure its future prosperity. When invasion threatened, Cincinnatians or-

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-41.

<sup>29</sup> Charles R. Wilson, "Cincinnati a Southern Outpost in 1860-1861?" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXIV (1938), 473-82.

ganized for a united resistance. When the first State war loan was authorized, the city council at once offered to take \$250,000.

The situation in neighboring Virginia afforded Ohio an opportunity to play a part in the conflict even before its troops were actually ready to take the field. At Governor Dennison's request the western counties of Virginia (soon to become the state of West Virginia) were added to General McClellan's department by the War Department early in May, and the governor urged his general to move Ohio troops across the Ohio River to protect loyal Virginians and to get control of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. McClellan, ever averse to precipitate action, required considerable prodding before he would act, but late in May Ohio troops, not yet in federal service, crossed the river at Parkersburg and Wheeling, pushed on to Grafton, and took over the rail lines to that point. At Philippi, some Ohio and loyal Virginia troops encountered a body of Confederates and fought the first battle of the war (after Fort Sumter), a minor engagement in which the Confederates were defeated.<sup>30</sup>

McClellan himself took the field late in June and completed the work of driving the enemy over the mountains. The reputation he acquired in this brief campaign led to his selection to command the Army of the Potomac, then being organized at Washington. Thus a former army captain, unknown to most Americans four months earlier, had become the highest ranking officer of the Army in active service. His appointment to command Ohio's troops had been a rare stroke of good fortune.

The West Virginia campaign was conducted, after McClellan's departure, by Generals William S. Rosecrans and Jacob D. Cox, and by the close of the year most of present West Virginia was under Union control.<sup>31</sup> Thus the movement for a new state could proceed without interference from the mother state. Ohio troops also served in Kentucky after the "neutrality" period had been ended by a Confederate invasion.

<sup>30</sup> Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, I, 40-58.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-145.

Governor Dennison had established two military camps, Chase at Columbus and Dennison near Cincinnati, which were taken over by federal authorities. He set up nine others in different parts of the State for recruits, and until the Federal Government was prepared to take over the task, had to provide subsistence and equipment. By the end of 1861 the State had furnished 100,224 men, of whom 77,844 were enlisted for three years.<sup>32</sup>

Considering the magnitude of the problem and his inexperience in military matters, Governor Dennison had done an excellent job in putting Ohio on a war footing. The muddling, mismanagement and loose spending of the early days of the war had been eliminated and the volume of criticism was subsiding. But the damage had been done. Already the governor had been denied a renomination by his party. The widespread impression created by short-sighted newspaper critics, grumbling soldiers and over-zealous patriots that he was an incompetent could not be overcome. In retirement he was to find himself better appreciated than when in the executive offices at the State House. His loyal support of his successor, to whom he became a trusted counsellor, and his willingness to put aside personal considerations for the cause of his country and his party disarmed his critics, and when Lincoln called him to a cabinet post in 1864, the choice was a popular one.

The Union mass meetings held all over the State after Fort Sumter and the absence of partisanship in the General Assembly foreshadowed a reorganization of parties in the face of a grave national peril. The spring municipal elections, held before Fort Sumter, pointed to a Democratic revival, but the war made partisanship unpopular, and many in both parties seemed to favor a Union movement. The Democratic State central committee precipitated matters by meeting on July 5 and calling a State convention for August 7. The call invited all who favored "perpetuating the principles on which our Union was founded, and are convinced that the present State and National Administrations are wholly incompetent to manage the government in its present critical condition."<sup>33</sup> Its failure to de-

<sup>32</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 57, 59-60.

<sup>33</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 80.

mand the restoration of the Union evoked criticisms from the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* and made it clear that narrow partisanship would dominate such a convention.

Many Douglas Democrats could not countenance such an attitude. Their deceased leader had made his last appearance in Ohio a few weeks earlier (on his way home to Illinois) when he had spoken unequivocally in favor of supporting the war. At Columbus from his unlighted hotel bedroom window after midnight he had addressed a great crowd which filled the street below.

"His deep sonorous voice rolled down through the darkness from above us,—an earnest, measured voice, the more solemn, the more impressive, because we could not see the speaker, and it came to us literally as 'a voice in the night,'—the night of our country's unspeakable trial. There was no uncertainty in his tone: the Union must be preserved and the insurrection must be crushed,—he pledged his hearty support to Mr. Lincoln's administration in doing this. Other questions must stand aside till the national authority should be everywhere recognized. I do not think we greatly cheered him,—it was rather a deep Amen that went up from the crowd." <sup>34</sup>

Next day, April 23, he addressed a great audience in the State House yard in support of the war.

Though Ohio Democracy's favorite leader had died soon afterward, his loyal lieutenants did not forget his words. Dr. G. Volney Dorsey, Miami County leader, in a public letter, proposed a Union convention of men of both parties and an abandonment of partisanship. The response was generally favorable, and the Republican State committee on July 25 resolved not to hold a State convention but to request the Democratic State committee to join in calling a bi-partisan meeting to nominate candidates. The *Ohio Statesman* was hostile, and in the Republican ranks the radical *Ashtabula Sentinel* saw in the plan an abandonment of Republican principles, but there was widespread popular support.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, I, 5-6.

<sup>35</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 80-2; Joseph P. Smith, *History of the Republican Party in Ohio* (Chicago, 1898), I, 134-5.



The Democratic State convention of August 7 showed in its platform an ill-concealed hostility toward the war by attributing the conflict to "misguided sectionalism engendered by fanatical agitators, North as well as South." The resolutions declared that the war should not be waged to overthrow the established institutions of the states, favored a national convention to restore the Union, denounced the conduct of the war by State and national governments, criticised the President's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, and thanked the volunteer soldiers who had been compelled to fight under inexperienced officers. Hugh J. Jewett of Muskingum County was named for governor over William Allen and Stanley Matthews. John Scott Harrison of Cincinnati, once a Whig and Anti-Nebraska member of Congress, whose Know-Nothingism had led him away from the Republican party, was nominated for lieutenant governor but declined to accept. John C. Marshall of Brown County, also a former Whig, was substituted for him by the State central committee. The rest of the ticket consisted of Democrats.<sup>36</sup>

Jewett was a staunch Union man and made this fact clear in his letter of acceptance. He was willing to support a movement for a national convention to attempt a restoration of harmony, believing that the mass of Southerners were not disloyal but had been betrayed. However, he was against submission to the extremists who were conducting the rebellion, and he would not weaken army or government in their efforts to preserve the Union.

The lack of unity in the Democratic ranks became evident when the State central committee strongly denounced the President for abridging freedom of speech and the press and declared that Ohio Democrats would not permit their constitutional rights to be impaired. The Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, already disturbed over the platform but willing to accept Jewett as a Union man, now demanded a repudiation of the platform as the price of its support.<sup>37</sup> The Cincinnati *Enquirer*, though it had been denouncing military

<sup>36</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 83-4.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-6.

despotism, swung to Lincoln's support against the radicals in his party and paid little attention to the State campaign.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, the coalition movement was making rapid headway. The Republican executive committee did not issue a formal call for a convention but its members and a number of prominent men of both parties joined in calling a convention to meet at Columbus on September 5. Each county was to send one delegate for each one thousand votes cast for supreme judge in 1860.<sup>39</sup> In most cases delegates were chosen by mass conventions, from which the more hide-bound Democrats held aloof. A capital city decorated with flags and bunting greeted the members of this first Union convention. The congestion in the theater in which they assembled was so great that they adjourned to the hall of the house of representatives, and later to the east terrace of the State House. Thomas Ewing, veteran Whig, was chosen as permanent chairman. For some years an independent in politics, he now avowed himself a staunch supporter of the administration. "Those who do not support our chief executive do not support the government. The time may have been otherwise, but it is not now." A brief platform of three resolutions repeated the Crittenden resolution, recently adopted by Congress, that the war was fought solely for the supremacy of the Constitution and the preservation of the Union, and quoted from a speech of Joseph Holt a pledge to stand for the Union without condition, and to preserve it at any cost against all its assailants and against any compromise proposed "under the guns of the rebels." Thus the Republican party dropped the slavery issue and merged with the War Democrats in a coalition movement.<sup>40</sup>

The gubernatorial nomination offered no problem. Governor Dennison, for reasons indicated earlier, was not considered, nor did it seem wise to name any other Republican. A Democrat at the head of the ticket would be a pledge that the Union party would not be dominated by antislavery radicals, and would appeal power-

<sup>38</sup> Charles R. Wilson, *The Cincinnati Daily Enquirer and Civil War Politics: A Study in Copperhead Opinion* (Chicago, 1937), 5-6.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Republican Party*, I, 135.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-9, for convention proceedings.

fully to Union supporters among the Democrats. Such a man was at hand in the person of David Tod of Mahoning County, ardent Douglas Democrat, who had presided over the Baltimore national convention of 1860 and had been an advocate of compromise before Fort Sumter. Indeed, Tod had declared that two hundred thousand Democrats would stop the Republicans from crossing the Ohio River if force were attempted against the South.<sup>41</sup> But when war came he had been among the first to take a stand in support of President Lincoln. His prominence among War Democrats brought him the nomination for governor without opposition. The other places on the ticket went to three Republicans, two Democrats and one American party supporter.

Behind the outward harmony of the convention lay some Republican dissatisfaction. Pronounced partisans like Senator Wade and Representative John A. Bingham had wanted the national and State administrations indorsed, while some of the radicals felt that the Republicans had abandoned their principles. But with the old organization taken over by the Union party the dissenters had to make the best of it. They became the left wing of the new war party, the moderate and conservative Republicans—the strong Lincoln men—constituted the center, while on the right were the former Democrats, mostly of the Douglas persuasion. There was also a sprinkling of American party supporters and old Whigs who had regarded the Republican party as too radical and sectional in the past. The presence at the convention of Thomas Ewing, Lewis D. Campbell of Butler County, former member of Congress, and William F. Johnston of Cincinnati, Whig candidate for governor in 1851, emphasized the conservative character of the movement. The most prominent Democrats, Tod excepted, refused to leave the old party. Most of them were loyal supporters of the war but were not prepared to give a vote of confidence to a Republican administration or to abandon the two-party system. But secondary figures, generally younger men, led the Democratic bolt. Among them were James H. Smith, former editor of the *Ohio Statesman*,

<sup>41</sup> Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, I, 4.

who became chairman of the Union State Executive Committee, G. Volney Dorsey of Miami County, nominated for State treasurer, William S. Groesbeck of Cincinnati, former Congressman, and Wilson S. Kennon of Belmont, elected a member of the General Assembly and later appointed secretary of state to fill a vacancy. Others, like Stanley Matthews, came into the Union party through the road of military service. Democrats who became soldiers often ceased to be Democrats.

The campaign lacked the fireworks of other years. Few speeches were made and there was little excitement. The war had displaced politics in public interest. Yet the total vote, though under that of 1860, was slightly larger than the vote of 1859 when Dennison had battled with Ranney. Tod's margin of victory was 55,223, over four times as large as Dennison's, though thousands of qualified voters were absent in military service.<sup>42</sup> The new Union party also controlled both houses of the General Assembly by overwhelming majorities. Even with a candidate who was not anti-war, the Democrats had done badly. In most counties large blocs of war supporters had joined the Union movement. Playing politics with the war had resulted in a disastrous defeat.

David Tod was inaugurated on January 13, 1862, with a great military display provided by the troops in training near the capital. It was in keeping with the grim task confronting the new governor. Tod was well equipped for his work. Born in 1805, he was the son of George Tod, a former resident of Connecticut who had served on the State supreme court at the time of the famous impeachment proceedings of 1809. David Tod had attended Burton Academy, Geauga County, had studied law at Warren, and had begun to practice at the age of twenty-two. He soon entered politics, was postmaster at Warren, served a term in the State senate, and became a leading figure in the Democratic party. In 1844 he was nominated for governor and again in 1846, being defeated both times by narrow margins. In 1847 he was appointed minister to Brazil and remained there for several years. Though an anti-bank radical in

<sup>42</sup> Smith, *Republican Party*, I, 140.



politics, Tod was a successful business man, being the first to ship coal from the Youngstown region to Cleveland by canal. To his coal, iron and related interests were added railroad investments, and he became president of the Cleveland and Mahoning Railroad. It was Tod's fate to have the gubernatorial prize which had twice eluded his ambition in his younger days come to him without effort in middle age because he had risen above partisanship in a great national crisis. A vigorous, forceful man with a wide experience in business and politics, he was well fitted to lead Ohio in the great conflict.<sup>43</sup>

The new governor's inaugural hewed to the line of Union party policy laid down in the campaign, preservation of the Union at all costs and support of the Federal Government by every means possible. He did not attack slavery or demand its abolition. He favored retrenchment of expenditures to provide for the State's war expenses and its share of the federal direct tax. The legislature accepted his recommendations and also sent a memorial to Congress for the repeal of the new income tax and its replacement by a direct tax on land.

The assembly considered the problem of absentee voting for soldiers but deferred action. It altered the State's congressional districts, since the new apportionment act of Congress reduced Ohio's representation from twenty-one to nineteen. The result was a gerrymander which was planned to give the Union party sixteen of the nineteen districts.<sup>44</sup>

Much of the attention of the assembly was devoted to the question of the United States senatorship.<sup>45</sup> Wade's term was to expire on March 4, 1863, and the conservatives were determined to prevent his re-election. Not all the radicals were in favor of Wade, and when the caucus assembled in March, 1862, no agreement could be reached. Among those considered for the place were Dennison, Rufus P. Spalding of Cleveland, Congressman John A. Gurley of Cincinnati, Governor Tod, Columbus Delano of Mt. Vernon,

<sup>43</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, XVIII, 567-8.

<sup>44</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 95-6.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-100.

Thomas Ewing, and William S. Groesbeck of Cincinnati. Conservatives rallied to Delano but his vote fell short of a majority. Several sessions of the caucus proved fruitless and the decision was deferred until the following January. Secretary of the Treasury Chase had his eye on the senatorship as a possible escape from cabinet difficulties and perhaps out of resentment for Wade's attitude toward Chase's presidential candidacy at the Chicago convention.<sup>46</sup> However, he and Wade achieved an understanding before the next session of the assembly and the former practically eliminated himself.

The struggle was renewed in January, 1863, and Chase's friends still seemed inclined to push him, but the withdrawal of Delano gave Wade the necessary margin for the nomination. Sixteen Unionists refused to be bound by the caucus action, but Wade's seventy-five votes on joint ballot were sufficient to elect.<sup>47</sup> The choice was not a wise one from the viewpoint of the friends of the Lincoln administration. Wade's violent radicalism made him a harsh critic of Lincoln's moderate policies.

Governor Tod, avoiding involvement in the dissensions in the Union party, devoted himself to the problems of the war. The administrative difficulties that had plagued Dennison had been straightened out before Tod came into office, and the new governor could turn his energies to other matters. These were serious enough. Union failures produced discontent and symptoms of war weariness; recruiting became more of a problem; the long lists of casualties brought the war home to many families; invasions of Kentucky threatened to reach Ohio; and Copperheadism began to rear its ugly head.

The great battle of Shiloh early in April was a profound shock, for Ohio troops had suffered heavily. For a while General Grant was the most unpopular man in his native State. Dereliction of duty and drunkenness were rumored as the prime causes of the slaughter. Three steamboats were hurried to the battlefield carry-

<sup>46</sup> Donnal V. Smith, *Chase and Civil War Politics* (Columbus, 1931), 57-60.

<sup>47</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 111-2.

ing physicians, nurses and hospital supplies to care for the wounded. State and Federal Government and private charity provided the funds. This practice was followed after other great battles, and by the end of the year eleven steamboats had been chartered by the State for these errands of mercy.<sup>48</sup>

Governor Tod began the practice of establishing State agencies at various places to look after the wants of Ohio soldiers, especially the sick and disabled, to provide transportation, to help the discharged secure their pay, and to lend a helping hand whenever Buckeye troops seemed to need it.<sup>49</sup> Besides those in Ohio, agencies were set up at Washington, New York City, Louisville, Memphis, Nashville, St. Louis and Cairo. There were changes of location later, and in 1864 twelve agencies were in operation, doing a great deal of relief work that might have fallen to the United States Sanitary Commission. The governor even made it his personal business to see to the welfare of Ohio troops, for he was quick to investigate complaints and to demand action when the grievance seemed justified. He bombarded the War Department and military authorities with telegrams when he found Ohio troops without tents, canteens or other necessities, or discriminated against in any way. Sometimes he acted too precipitately but his vigorous methods helped cut through red tape and generally secured results.

Recruiting in 1862 proved to be a difficult task. The threat to Washington from Stonewall Jackson's invasion of the Shenandoah Valley drew out 5,000 men, mostly for three months' service, but the President's calls for additional men for three years were met with difficulty. Ohio's quota was 74,000, of which half might be raised by a draft upon the State militia. Communities, anxious to avoid the stigma of having their citizens drafted, tried by bounties and other ways to fill their quotas. County military committees supervised the recruiting. By the first of October twenty-six counties had succeeded in their efforts, but 12,251 men were drafted from the others. About 4,800 volunteered in person or by substitute

<sup>48</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 65-7.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-8, 177-9, 186-94.

after the draft, 2,900 were exempted for various reasons, 1,900 ran away, while 2,400 remained to be sent as replacements to regiments in the field. Most of the volunteers in this recruiting campaign had gone to new regiments, assigned to the counties, which were grouped into districts, the new officers acting as recruiting agents in their localities with their commissions dependent on their efforts. Such a system did not produce the highest type of officer and it did not help fill the depleted ranks of the veteran regiments at the front. But it was a successful recruiting device. By the close of 1862 Ohio had filled her quota, volunteers having been secured to replace the runaways.<sup>50</sup>

Ohioans who felt that the war was wrong were growing more vociferous and a few felt the heavy hand of the military authorities. The most conspicuous was Dr. Edson B. Olds of Lancaster, a former Democratic Congressman, who had never been noted for his moderation. In a campaign for the congressional nomination in July, 1862, he attacked the administration for conducting an abolition war and declared that Democrats would refuse to volunteer in such a cause. Under an order of the secretary of war, at Governor Tod's recommendation, Olds was arrested by federal officers and sent to Fort Lafayette in New York harbor where he was detained until December. John W. Kees, editor of the *Circleville Watchman*, and Archibald McGregor, editor of the *Canton Stark County Democrat*, were also locked up for a time for intemperate utterances, which were regarded as tending to discourage enlistments and to incite resistance to the draft. Of the eleven arrests which were made in Ohio, Governor Tod had recommended two.<sup>51</sup>

Military dangers also threatened the Buckeye State in the summer of 1862. Cincinnati underwent two alarms.<sup>52</sup> The first came when Colonel John Morgan's cavalry dashed into Kentucky, threatened Frankfort and Lexington, reached Cynthiana and Paris, encountering little opposition, and then turned southward after inflicting much property damage. Governor Tod rushed what troops were

<sup>50</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 69-80.

<sup>51</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 106-7.

<sup>52</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 83-98, for the siege of Cincinnati.



available at camps Chase and Dennison to Lexington, Cincinnati sent its police force and the danger was soon over.

Far more serious was the northward march of General Kirby Smith's army of twelve thousand men. On September 1 he entered Lexington, the Union forces withdrawing to Louisville. Part of his army was sent toward Covington and Cincinnati, which was almost without protection, though General Buell had a large Union army in Tennessee. There were fears that this rich prize would fall to the Confederates before help could arrive. Then ensued a period of frantic efforts to devise a system of defenses. The city council empowered the mayor to suspend all business and call every man to the defense of the city, and it authorized any expenditures that might be found necessary to combat the invader. General Horatio G. Wright in command at Louisville sent General Lewis Wallace of Indiana to take over the defense of Cincinnati, Newport and Covington.

Martial law was proclaimed, all business suspended, all citizens were ordered to assemble for the assignment of tasks and the principle was adopted, "Citizens for the labor, soldiers for the battle." Trenches and rifle-pits were dug on the Kentucky side of the river back of Newport and Covington, citizen soldiers organized by wards and hastily started drilling, a pontoon bridge was constructed over the Ohio, and materials and supplies were soon on their way to provide fortifications and equip the defenders.

Governor Tod came in person to Cincinnati and ordered the regiments in training or being recruited to be sent there at once. Soon he announced that the offers of many communities to send armed men to defend the Queen City would be accepted and that the State would pay the railroad fares. Only men with guns were wanted, and troops in the river counties were to remain in their own localities for home defense. All over the State local Paul Reveres spread the alarm, and the "Squirrel Hunters," as they came to be known, began to converge on Cincinnati with every variety of firearms, some bearing antique muskets, powder horns and buckskin pouches. They were fed at the Fifth Street market house and

slept in halls, warehouses and other large buildings. Three days after his first proclamation the governor announced that no more troops were needed. But the appearance of some Confederate advance units a few days later produced a second alarm and a call for aid to the military committees of northern Ohio. After some skirmishes, however, the invaders retired. Their demonstration was merely to cover General Kirby Smith's retreat. Had he advanced at once after taking Lexington he might have seized Cincinnati, though he could hardly have held it. But delays had given the city time to organize for defense. The "siege" had lasted two weeks. At the next session of the assembly the governor was authorized to provide for the printing and lithographing of discharges for the patriotic "Squirrel Hunters," as they were now designated in the resolution.

The military reverses of 1862 produced a reaction against the Lincoln administration and criticisms from two directions. The radicals fulminated against its spinelessness and demanded harsh confiscation acts and emancipation of the slaves; Democrats complained of administrative inefficiency, of military arrests, of the dangers of an influx of free Negroes into the Northwest, if emancipation came about, and of the economic depression from the loss of southern markets.

Northern Ohio radicals, as represented by the *Ashtabula Sentinel* and the *Cleveland Leader*, wanted the Republican party restored and the Union party label dropped.<sup>53</sup> Richard Smith, editor of the once conservative *Cincinnati Gazette*, now turned radical by the fires of civil war, was writing of his lack of confidence in the national administration in private letters. "The country has lost confidence in him [Lincoln] and this can never be regained," he declared, with all the assurance characteristic of his profession. "His policy, no policy, or want of pluck has brought the country to the verge of ruin, until the Northern people, and especially those who elected him president are seriously talking about a revolution." A few weeks later, somewhat shamefacedly, he admitted that

<sup>53</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 100-2; *Cleveland Leader*, June 14, 20, 21, 24, 25, 1862.

the President "has re-inspired confidence and he is now getting to be very popular."<sup>54</sup>

At any rate the Union party held together in spite of dissensions, and at its State convention at Columbus on August 21 showed conservative tendencies. The platform declared the party's adherence to the opinions and principles of the convention of 1861, expressed "undiminished confidence" in President Lincoln and his prosecution of the war and promised him the support of all the moral and physical power of the State, approved of the conduct of Governor Tod, and praised the volunteer army for its promptness in enlisting and its courage in the field. The nominations for the five State offices to be filled went apparently to conservatives, though only one was a former Democrat. The rejection of Milton Sutliff for a second term on the supreme bench seemed to indicate a desire to keep radicals off the ticket, for he had voted against the constitutionality of the fugitive law in 1859.<sup>55</sup>

The Democratic convention, meeting at Columbus on July 4, was a gathering conducted by the party's wheel horses. Medary presided and Clement L. Vallandigham, Rufus P. Ranney and Allen G. Thurman helped write the platform. That document, while insisting that the Democrats were the devoted friends of the Constitution and the Union, assailed the abolitionists for bringing partisanship to the front and for aiding the enemy by denouncing conservative tendencies of the President, defaming generals, and misrepresenting conservative men as rebel sympathizers. The platform condemned confiscation and emancipation acts as unconstitutional and as having a tendency to prolong the war. If carried out, they would add to the sectional bitterness, destroy the industrial interests of a large section of the country and would engulf the free states, Ohio in particular, with free Negroes. Illegal arrests of citizens for political offenses were also denounced as flagrant violations of the Constitution. Both Vallandigham and Thurman referred in their convention speeches to the recent arrest of Kees

<sup>54</sup> Muriel Bernitt Drell, ed., "Letters by Richard Smith of the Cincinnati Gazette," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXVI (1940), 543-4.

<sup>55</sup> Smith, *Republican Party*, I, 146-9; Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 102.

of the Circleville *Watchman* and charged their opponents with being the real disunionists.<sup>56</sup>

While the peace, or Copperhead, element seemed to be in control of the convention, the nominations were satisfactory to conservatives. Rufus P. Ranney, now named for supreme judge, had run against Dennison for governor in 1859 and was one of the party's ablest men. He was an avowed supporter of the Union and the war.

The divisions in the Democratic ranks cropped out at times in the campaign. The Ashland *Union* could refer to "Hired Hessians going to the sunny Southern soil to butcher by wholesale, not foreigners, but good men, as exemplary Christians as any of our men who believe they are fighting for God-given rights. This is a damned abolition war, and we believe Abe Lincoln is as much of a traitor as Jeff Davis."<sup>57</sup> Yet Ranney, accompanied by Samuel Galloway, former Congressman and strong Republican, addressed a meeting at Lancaster on July 23 in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war. For a time the Democratic *Ohio Eagle* of Lancaster dropped Ranney's name from its list of Democratic candidates, and Olds called him an abolitionist. Democratic papers took sides but later the Lancaster editor recanted.<sup>58</sup>

Ex-Senator William Allen emerged from retirement late in the summer to deliver a resounding war speech at Chillicothe. He denounced Southerners as rebels, called upon all loyal men to answer the call of Lincoln, and denied that the war was an abolition one. Republican organs praised the veteran Democrat for his effort.<sup>59</sup>

But President Lincoln's preliminary Emancipation Proclamation of September 22, warning the Confederate states that their slaves would be set free on January 1, 1863, if they continued to resist, seemed to prove the Democratic contention that the war was an abolition affair. The President, they argued, had violated both the Chicago platform of 1860 and the Crittenden pledge of 1861. He had given in to the radicals. William Allen, in a partisan speech,

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-42.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, 142, footnote.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>59</sup> Reginald C. McGrane, *William Allen* (Columbus, 1925), 154.



blamed the fanatics but said that Lincoln expected to be guided by the election results and would not carry out the proclamation if the conservatives triumphed. He warned Ohioans against the dangers of a mass migration of free Negroes. "Every white laboring man in the North who does not want to be swapped off for a free nigger should vote the Democratic ticket," he declared.<sup>60</sup> Vallandigham, battling for re-election to Congress, demanded that the Administration obey the Constitution. He assailed abolition despotism, preached northwestern sectionalism, and made no attempt to disguise his anti-war sentiments. The Cincinnati *Enquirer* offered a popular slogan, "The Constitution as it is, the Union as it was, and the Negroes where they are."<sup>61</sup>

The election was a near-disaster for the Union party. Their State candidates were defeated by majorities ranging from 4,377 for attorney-general to 6,963 for supreme judge.<sup>62</sup> What was even worse, only five of their nineteen congressional candidates were successful. Union party redistricting had created too many close districts, and the Democratic swing had been strong enough to carry fourteen seats. The chief consolation of Union party supporters was the defeat of Vallandigham in the Dayton district by General Robert C. Schenck. The gerrymander had been too much for him. Three other districts carried by Union party candidates were in northeastern Ohio, and one—the Toledo district—in the northwest. Dr. Edson B. Olds, still a prisoner, was elected to the lower house of the Ohio legislature to fill a vacancy.

The jubilant Democrats could call it a party revolution, for it was the first victory for their State ticket since 1853. Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin had shown a similar anti-administration trend,<sup>63</sup> though elsewhere the Union party had held its own sufficiently to retain control of Congress. Various explanations were

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 157-8.

<sup>61</sup> H. Clyde Hubbart, *The Older Middle West* (New York, 1936), 184-5; Wilson, *Enquirer and Civil War Politics*, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Smith, *Republican Party*, I, 150.

<sup>63</sup> Hubbart, *Older Middle West*, 188-90.

offered for the outcome.<sup>64</sup> Democrats regarded it as a repudiation of the administration, particularly emphasizing arbitrary arrests and emancipation, while the peace element became more open and more vociferous, feeling that the State was becoming anti-war. Unionists believed that the inability of the soldiers in the field to vote accounted for the result, together with military failures and political arrests. Some thought the administration had been too slow in dealing with the emancipation problem and lacked vigor. Senator John Sherman attributed the result to the abandonment of the old well-drilled Republican organization and general dissatisfaction with the conduct and results of the war. Whatever the explanation, Ohio had repudiated Abraham Lincoln. The star of the Copperheads seemed to be in the ascendant.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 190-1; Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 108-9; Rachel Sherman Thorndike, ed., *The Sherman Letters* (New York, 1894), 167.

# The Civil War: The Years of Decision 1863-1865

OHIO'S COPPERHEADS—the term came to be used generally in 1863—came out into the open after the victory of 1862 and set about to convert the Democratic party into a vehicle which would terminate hostilities and restore the Union, if possible, by peaceful means.<sup>1</sup> The Jackson Day dinner of January 8 was characterized by long tirades against Lincoln's unconstitutional acts, in which Thurman and Jewett vied with Medary, Attorney-General-elect Lyman R. Critchfield, and the ex-prisoners, Edson B. Olds and Archibald McGregor, in giving vent to intemperate criticisms of the administration and its measures.<sup>2</sup> In the adjourned session of the legislature the minority, infused with a new vigor as a result of the election, kept the issue of military arrests to the fore and did secure the adoption of a resolution for a select committee to inquire into the matter. The committee, consisting of three Unionists and two Democrats, reported that there was no legislation covering such offenses as discouraging enlistments and obstructing the draft, and that the authorities were justified, therefore, in suspending the writ of habeas corpus and confining temporarily seditious persons.<sup>3</sup>

Democratic attempts to legislate against military arrests were defeated, and measures were enacted modifying existing laws in order to permit the removal from the State of persons arrested by

<sup>1</sup> Wood Gray, *The Hidden Civil War* (New York, 1942), 140-1.

<sup>2</sup> George H. Porter, *Ohio Politics during the Civil War Period*, *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law* (New York), XL (1911), 149-50; John S. Hare, "Allen G. Thurman", Ph. D. thesis, Ohio State University, 1933, 127-9.

<sup>3</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 110-3, 150-5, for an account of the legislative session.

military orders. Representative Otto Dressel of Franklin County offered resolutions condemning federal usurpation, the conscription act, the national banking system, the Emancipation Proclamation and other acts of the administration, but only ten Democrats were ready to support such sweeping expressions of condemnation. No action was taken on Democratic proposals to stop Negro immigration into Ohio. On the other hand, the Union majority avoided any expression of opinion on the Emancipation Proclamation, though it pledged all aid to the administration in putting down the rebellion and indorsed, at Chase's behest, the national banking bill pending in Congress. At Governor Tod's suggestion absentee soldier voting was provided for in an act prescribing the method and machinery whereby soldiers in the field could cast their ballots.

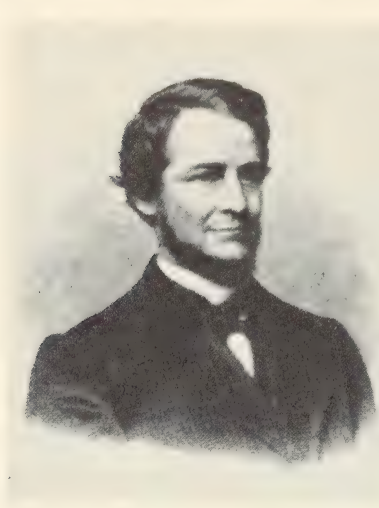
The governor was eager to have a well organized State militia available for home defense and presented a plan to the house military committee. After long consideration a bill was finally passed to enroll every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and forty-five in the militia, and to provide from this force an armed body of volunteers known as the Ohio Volunteer Militia. County and township officials were to enroll and organize the whole militia, from which the governor was to choose companies and batteries to make up the "volunteer militia." The latter were required to have a certain number of "musters," or training days, each year, to be armed and equipped for instant service, and to serve for five years. Upon Adjutant-General Charles W. Hill fell the heavy burden of inaugurating the militia system, but by the close of the year he was able to report a total organized militia of 167,572 men, and a volunteer militia of 43,930 ready for immediate service.<sup>4</sup> They were not yet organized when Morgan's raid occurred in July, 1863, but the year 1864 saw the new guardsmen perform services of considerable value.

The coming State election cast its shadow many months before it was to occur, for the peace movement seemed about to seize con-

<sup>4</sup> Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio in the War* (Columbus, 1893), I, 130-3.



trol of the Democratic party and make Vallandigham its candidate for governor. Clement L. Vallandigham was one of the most courageous, strong-willed and wrong-headed men in Ohio's history. Born in New Lisbon, Columbiana County, Ohio, in 1820, the son of



13. CLEMENT L. VALLANDIGHAM

a Presbyterian minister of Virginia ancestry, he was of mixed Scotch-Irish and Flemish Huguenot blood, which seems to account for some of the salient traits of his character.<sup>5</sup> He attended New Lisbon Academy and Jefferson College, Canonsburg (Pa.), was admitted to the bar, soon entered politics and was a member of the Ohio lower house from 1845 to 1847. He then moved to Dayton, became part owner and editor of the Dayton *Empire* but presently gave most of his energies to law and politics. Defeated for Con-

gress by Lewis D. Campbell in 1852 and 1854, he was apparently defeated again in 1856 by a narrow margin but contested the election and secured the seat. Reelected in 1858 and 1860, he displayed a pronounced state-rights viewpoint and a decided aversion for abolitionism, due in part to his southern ancestry. Though he supported Douglas in 1860, he had been affiliated with the conservative wing of the party in the 1850's and was not moved by the Little Giant's plea for support of the war in 1861.

Vallandigham in Congress regarded himself as the spokesman of western sectionalism. More hostile to the North (meaning the eastern states) than to the South, he would have the West assert its growing might in the interests of sectional peace. The West,

<sup>5</sup> For a brief sketch see *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIX, 143-5. A more detailed and sympathetic account is J. L. Vallandigham, *A Life of Clement L. Vallandigham* (Baltimore, 1872).

he felt, had too long been tributary to the North. If the Union were dissolved, South and West had a natural community of interest in the Mississippi Valley to draw them together. The way to preserve the Union, he believed, was to recognize the existence of four distinct groups of states, North, South, West and Pacific Coast. By a constitutional amendment he would require the consent of a majority of the senators from each section for the passage of laws and would have the President elected by similar sectional majorities of the electors. If the state legislatures in a section consented, a state might secede. This fantastic scheme, like Calhoun's proposal for two presidents in 1850, seemed almost designed to promote the centrifugal and sectional tendencies that threatened the very existence of democratic government. It gives a picture of the mental processes of the chief of the Copperheads. With his eyes turned to the past, he refused to see the economic transformation of his beloved West that had altered its old sectional relations. The ties that had bound it with the South had been weakened by the New England migration to the upper Northwest, the building of east-west railroads, the spread of industry, the growing eastern markets, and other factors. His was not the voice of the West but only of the lower Ohio Valley, and even here there were many dissenters.

Vallandigham was uncompromisingly against the war. He insisted that he was for the Union but that only by negotiation and compromise could it be restored, never by war. If restoration was not possible, then he wanted at least the Mississippi Valley preserved under the old Constitution. His dislike of New England was accentuated by the war. While her profits mounted, the West was suffering from the loss of southern trade.<sup>6</sup>

The Dayton Congressman had slight support in his opposition to the war in the days following Fort Sumter, but by 1862 the party seemed to be catching up with him. In Congress George H. Pendleton of Cincinnati usually seconded his efforts, and in the spring of 1862, six of the eight Ohio members of the House and several

<sup>6</sup> Elbert J. Benton, "The Movement for Peace without a Victory during The Civil War," Western Reserve Historical Society, *Publications* (Cleveland) No. 99 (1918), 12-9; Henry Clyde Hubbart, *The Older Middle West* (New York, 1936), 179-81.

from other states signed an address to the public, setting forth the Democratic party's position.<sup>7</sup> Vallandigham wrote it, though it was more moderate in tone than were his speeches. In the session of 1862-63, after his defeat for re-election, he openly declared himself in favor of an armistice and an attempt to restore the Union by negotiation. He was willing to accept an offer of mediation from Napoleon III of France. He fought the bill to validate military arrests and the new draft bill, and had the support of most of his Democratic colleagues, emboldened by the election results of 1862.<sup>8</sup>

In Ohio Samuel Medary vied with Vallandigham in opposing the administration and the war. Returning from Kansas, where he had been territorial governor, he resumed his newspaper career by establishing the *Crisis* at Columbus early in 1861 to help save the old Union and the rights of the states.<sup>9</sup> When the war came, he refused to accept it as the only solution and became increasingly anti-administration and anti-war, while the *Crisis* gained circulation and the hatred of loyal Unionists.

By 1863 two shades of opinion were discernible in the Democratic party. Working with Medary, Vallandigham, Pendleton and other peace advocates were such prominent men as Allen G. Thurman, former member of Congress and once a State supreme judge, ex-Governor William Medill, George E. Pugh, United States Senator from 1855 to 1861, and William Allen. The group as a whole had been loyal Buchanan supporters but had accepted Douglas, rather than Breckinridge, Buchanan's choice, as the presidential favorite of the Ohio Democracy in 1860, though, Pugh excepted, they were not original Douglas men. It is significant that among the most violent peace organs were the Dayton *Empire*, the Ashland *Union*, the *Stark County Democrat*, the Lancaster *Ohio Eagle* and other papers that had not been pro-Douglas and for the most part had been aligned with the Allen faction in the early 1850's. At least two of the men arrested for anti-war activities, Judge Lawrence

<sup>7</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 136-8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 145-8.

<sup>9</sup> Columbus *Crisis*, Jan. 31, 1861, states his views.



W. Hall of Crawford County and Archibald McGregor, editor of the *Stark County Democrat*, had been leaders of the Breckinridge faction in 1860.

On the other hand the more ardent Douglas men generally held aloof from the peace movement. Regarded as war supporters were Judge Rufus P. Ranney, Henry B. Payne of Cleveland, and Hugh J. Jewett, candidate for governor in 1861. This was the position of the chief party organ of northern Ohio, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. The Columbus *Ohio Statesman*, once a Douglas organ, supported Vallandigham, after his nomination in 1863, as did Congressman Samuel S. Cox, who had been more moderate than the dyed-in-the-wool anti-war leaders. Washington McLean and James J. Faran of the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, also former Douglas Democrats, for a time actually had kind words for Lincoln but eventually reached the Vallandigham camp by means of the constitutional issue. Tod, Dorsey, Groesbeck, and Stanley Matthews, as has been indicated, represented the Douglas element in the Union party.

The chief centers of strength of the Ohio Copperheads lay in the "Backbone" counties in the north central and northwest central parts of the State, a conservative Democratic area typified by Holmes and Crawford counties. These two had had the largest percentages of drafted men of any counties in 1862. Unlike Indiana and Illinois, Ohio's southern counties, with a few exceptions, such as Butler, Pike and Monroe, were Unionist. The peace movement seemed to appeal to old-fashioned, hard-shell party veterans, whose state rights constitutionalism had been outraged by the war-time acts of the Lincoln administration. Some of the leaders, Pendleton, Pugh and Vallandigham himself, were comparatively young in years, but they were not newcomers in politics, while Medary, Thurman, Olds, Medill and Allen were middle-aged or elderly.

As the peace movement gained momentum in the spring of 1863, acts of violence revealed the growing tension. In Noble County in the southeastern hills there was armed resistance to an attempt to arrest a deserter. The county was Republican but among its rural citizenry were some Democrats of Copperhead persuasion.



At Hoskinsville in March, nearly a hundred armed men prevented a deputy United States marshal and his aides from seizing a deserter. Two companies of soldiers from Cincinnati were then sent to the village only to find that the "rebels" had taken to the hills and that the "rebellion" was ended. Several arrests were made and later some fourteen or fifteen men were convicted for obstructing the laws or for conspiracy.<sup>10</sup> The affair received far more publicity than its importance warranted.

In Holmes County in June occurred a more serious outbreak against the draft. An enrolling officer was mobbed, and when a provost-marshal attempted to arrest four ringleaders, a body of armed men released the prisoners. A colonel with 420 men was sent to the county and Governor Tod formally ordered the malcontents to disperse as it was reported that they had established themselves in a fortified camp. When the soldiers approached the camp, located near the village of Napoleon, they were fired upon, but this one volley practically ended the resistance. The "rebels" scattered, a few were captured, two of them were wounded, and to the soldiers was left the task of hunting down and arresting the leaders. Prominent Democrats, anxious to end the trouble, negotiated with the insurgents and secured the peaceful surrender of the four men who had been taken from the provost-marshal. They also promised to deliver any others that were wanted, and most of the soldiers then returned to Columbus. There were reports that on the preceding Sunday a thousand men had been in the camp, which was protected by four small howitzers, but this number did not show up for the fighting.<sup>11</sup>

On March 5 a mob composed of soldiers from Camp Chase wrecked the office of Medary's *Crisis*. The editor was away at the time but on his return was greeted by a large crowd of sympathetic Democrats who escorted him to his home. The *Crisis* continued undaunted, and the soldiers went unpunished.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Wayne Jordan, "The Hoskinsville Rebellion", *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XLVII (1938), 319-54.

<sup>11</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 127-9; Fred A. Shannan, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865* (Cleveland, 1928), II, 228-9.

<sup>12</sup> Alfred E. Lee, *History of the City of Columbus* (New York, 1892), I, 458-9.

Dr. Olds, in retaliation for his imprisonment of the preceding year, had a Fairfield County common pleas judge issue a warrant for the arrest of Governor Tod in March on an indictment for kidnapping.<sup>13</sup> The governor was quickly released by order of Judge Gholson of the supreme court but gave bond for his appearance in the county court on June 1. When that date arrived, the case was continued, but Olds at once instituted a civil suit for one hundred thousand dollars damages. A petition to have this suit transferred to a United States court was denied by the judge, but an act of March 17, 1864, made this mandatory and authorized the State supreme court to compel such transfer. Eventually the case reached the federal court but never came up for trial. Meanwhile the Olds incident was forgotten, for Vallandigham had now preempted the center of the stage.

The leader of the Copperheads, bitter over his defeat for reelection, determined to become the party's candidate for governor as a vindication. The boldness of his utterances might ultimately have reacted against him, but matters were not allowed to run their course. Instead, General Ambrose E. Burnside gave Vallandigham an opportunity to play the role of champion of freedom of speech. Burnside, commander of the department of the Ohio with headquarters at Cincinnati, was annoyed at the southern sympathies and even treasonous activities of some elements of that city and determined to curb them. He issued General Order No. 38 threatening with the death penalty certain classes of persons who were secretly aiding the enemy, and concluding with this statement:

"The habit of declaring sympathy for the enemy will not be allowed in this department. Persons committing such offenses will be at once arrested with a view to being tried as above stated, or sent beyond our lines into the lines of their friends. It must be distinctly understood that treason, expressed or implied, will not be tolerated in this department."

Vallandigham regarded the order as a challenge and proceeded

<sup>13</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 157-8.

to defy General Burnside.<sup>14</sup> The latter was a kindly, well disposed man, and his action was in line with what other military commanders had done and were doing, but it was ill-timed. At a great Democratic rally at Mt. Vernon on Friday, May 1, S. S. Cox, Pendleton and Vallandigham all spoke, the last named outdoing himself in denouncing military despotism. As to Order No. 38, he "despised it, spit upon it, trampled it under his feet." He even invited his listeners to resist it, so it was charged at the trial, though his statements were less definite on this point. He also criticised the administration for ignoring opportunities to make peace and warned his listeners of impending dangers to free government. Later, at his trial he denied that he had advocated forcible resistance, and Cox testified in his behalf. The latter also stated that he, not Vallandigham, had made certain criticisms of the impending draft attributed to the Daytonian. Two officers took notes on Vallandigham's speech and reported to General Burnside. The latter acted promptly, though it would have been wiser if he had consulted with his superiors. Before dawn on Tuesday, May 5, Vallandigham was arrested at his home at Dayton by an officer and a company of soldiers and taken to Cincinnati by a special train.

Excited crowds thronged the streets of Dayton all that day, and stirred up by liquor and an inflammatory editorial in the *Dayton Empire*, proceeded that night to break open and wreck the office of the Republican *Dayton Journal*, and then to set fire to the building. It was burned down, as were several neighboring buildings, the rioters preventing the fire companies from putting out the fire. Martial law was necessary to restore order.

Vallandigham was brought before a military commission on the following charge:

<sup>14</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 99-124, gives a detailed account of the arrest and trial. For a judicious treatment by a participant, see Jacob D. Cox, *Military Reminiscences of the Civil War* (New York, 1900), I, 450-72. General Cox was in command of the Ohio Military District under General Burnside who was in charge of the larger Department of the Ohio. Official records may be consulted in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series II, Vol. V (Washington, 1899), 555, 556, 557, 573-84, 608, 633-46.

“Charge.—Publicly expressing, in violation of General Orders No. 38, from Head-quarters Department of the Ohio, sympathy for those in arms against the Government of the United States, and declaring disloyal sentiments and opinions, with the object and purpose of weakening the power of the Government in its efforts to suppress an unlawful rebellion.”

Then followed a series of quotations from his speech in support of the charge. Though he cross-examined a few witnesses, Vallandigham made no defense since he denied the right of a military tribunal to try him. In a formal protest which he read to the court he demanded his rights as a citizen and insisted that he had not advocated the use of force but only of free elections and the ballot box. The court, after due deliberation, sentenced him to confinement in a United States fort for the duration of the war, General Burnside designating Fort Warren, Boston, as the prison.

George E. Pugh, as attorney for Vallandigham, then applied to Judge Humphrey H. Leavitt of the federal circuit court for a writ of habeas corpus to secure the prisoner's release from unlawful imprisonment. District Attorney Flamen Ball and Aaron F. Perry, as special counsel, represented General Burnside. Pugh's argument was a brilliant defense of the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, which, he charged, were violated by Vallandigham's arrest and trial. In reply, Perry flatly denied that there was anything unconstitutional about the whole proceedings. Military authority was provided for in war time when civil authority was unable to cope with the situation. All civil rights would be lost if the Constitution were overthrown by its enemies. Charging that Vallandigham was guilty of inciting his listeners to treasonous acts, Perry declared that “if these laboratories of treason are to be kept in full blast, they will manufacture traitors faster than our armies can kill them.”

Judge Leavitt in his decision refused to grant a writ of habeas corpus, basing his opinion on an earlier case of similar character, in which Justice Noah H. Swayne of the United States Supreme Court had participated, while on circuit duty. The war powers of



the President, he held, were a sufficient warrant for what General Burnside had done. The judge concluded his opinion with a little lecture to the disloyal which gave great offense to anti-war Democrats. The United States Supreme Court in February, 1864, refused to review the proceedings of the military commission, though in 1866, in the famous Millikin case, it denied the authority of a military court over civilians where the civil courts were still functioning. Whatever the merits of Vallandigham's defense from the point of view of abstract constitutional law, his release would have been a graver blunder than his arrest. Both court and President had to back up the overzealous military commander.

The rest of the story is a familiar one. Lincoln, with his shrewd grasp of the dangerous possibilities in the situation, decided to commute the sentence of the military commission and exile the Copperhead leader to the southern Confederacy. Accordingly, on May 25 he was sent across the lines to General Braxton Bragg's headquarters. To northern patriots, this was where he belonged. The President had made the punishment fit the crime. The somewhat embarrassed Confederate authorities permitted their guest to leave for the Bermudas on a blockade runner on June 17. After ten days on the islands he sailed for Halifax, arriving at that port July 5. By July 15 he was at the Clifton House, Niagara Falls, on the Canadian side. By this time he had been nominated for governor of Ohio.

Ohio Democrats had not, prior to his martyrdom, been prepared to accept Vallandigham as their gubernatorial choice. Hugh J. Jewett, the candidate in 1861, was more highly regarded by the leading party papers, as the extremist views of the Dayton firebrand disqualified him with the moderates. A Unionist trend was discernible in the spring of 1863 when Cincinnati rejected the Democratic candidates in the municipal election. But the public meetings and resolutions provoked by Vallandigham's arrest, many of them outside Ohio, swept away the conservative opposition and insured his selection to head the ticket.

By June 11, when the State convention met at Columbus, Jewett

had withdrawn. General McClellan, still regarded as an Ohioan, was suggested as a possibility by the moderates but the Vallandigham tide could not be stemmed. An enormous crowd—estimates varied from 25,000 to 100,000—turned the convention, which had assembled on the south terrace of the State House, into a huge mass meeting with the Peace Democracy clearly in the ascendant. Former Governor William Medill presided and Vallandigham was nominated by acclamation after an informal ballot had given him 411 votes to 11 for Jewett. George E. Pugh, in accepting the nomination for Vallandigham, execrated Order No. 38 in words more violent than his client had ever uttered, though he did not directly indorse the peace viewpoint. The former United States Senator was at once nominated for lieutenant-governor to carry the burden of the campaign in Vallandigham's absence. The rest of the ticket was strongly Peace Democratic in composition.<sup>15</sup>

The platform, the work of Allen G. Thurman, was more moderate than the candidates. It emphasized the constitutional issue and the right of criticising the administration, protested against emancipation and martial law, and declared that the party would hail with pleasure any manifestation of a desire by the seceded states to return to their allegiance and would cooperate with them in restoring peace and providing for the security of their interests and rights. It suggested a constitutional convention of the states to frame such amendments as were necessary to preserve the Constitution. It denounced the arrest, trial and banishment of Vallandigham, quoted four provisions of the Constitution which had been violated thereby, and called upon the President to permit his return. Governor Tod was condemned for his actions and Governor Horatio Seymour of New York was thanked for a letter criticising Burnside's act. A little extremist group, headed by the erratic William M. Corry of Cincinnati, proposed to recognize the separation of North and South but received no support from the convention.

A committee of one from each congressional district was chosen to present to President Lincoln a request for Vallandigham's re-

<sup>15</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 170-4.

lease. It met at Washington on June 26 and prepared a statement on his behalf, which was answered by Lincoln on June 29. The President did not confine himself to constitutional arguments but made an offer to the committee to release Vallandigham if its members, or a majority of them, would indorse three propositions. These were, in brief, a recognition of the existence of the rebellion and the constitutionality of the use of the army and navy to suppress it; a pledge to do nothing to lessen the efficiency of army and navy; and a further promise to do everything possible to have the soldiers properly provided for and supported. The committee rejected the President's propositions as in the nature of a bargain reflecting upon their own sincerity and fidelity as citizens, and as an evasion of the grave questions at issue.<sup>16</sup>

Vallandigham issued an address accepting the nomination on July 15. He put the leading issue in these words: "Shall there be free speech, a free press, peaceable assemblages of the people, and a free ballot any longer in Ohio?" Yet the closing paragraph reiterated his belief that the Confederate States could not be conquered. He had traveled a thousand miles through the South, he said, and found a united people, better prepared in every way than at the beginning of the struggle. Reunion could come only when the invading armies were withdrawn.<sup>17</sup> This restatement of his earnest convictions was not good strategy. It helped the opposition to shift the issue from the constitutional one to the question of war or peace.

Within the Union party ranks there had been a certain amount of bad feeling before the Vallandigham affair. The old Republicans could not forget Tod's Democratic antecedents and were inclined to challenge his appointments of former Democrats to high office. When Auditor Robert W. Tayler was offered the position of comptroller of the treasury under Secretary Chase, the governor proposed to appoint to the vacancy Wilson S. Kennon, a former Democrat, defeated on the Union ticket for secretary of state in 1862. The *Ohio State Journal* and Chase joined in protesting the appoint-

<sup>16</sup> *Records of the Rebellion*, Series II, Vol. VI, 48-53, 56-9, 64-8.

<sup>17</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 164-5.

ment, and as a consequence Tayler refused to give up the auditorship until Kennon was rewarded with another place. Tod was also disliked because he had not taken an advanced stand on emancipation but had followed Lincoln's lead, holding generally to a conservative position. Such criticisms, together with his military arrests and some undiplomatic expressions of opinion to army officers and others, had hurt his popularity and placed obstacles in the way of his renomination.<sup>18</sup>

The appearance of Union Leagues in Ohio to arouse Union sentiment and checkmate Copperhead organizations strengthened the Union party in the spring of 1863,<sup>19</sup> but they proved to be under radical influence and played a part in defeating Tod. There seemed to be no candidate, however, upon whom both radicals and conservatives could rally, and almost up to the meeting of the State convention, his nomination seemed assured. Then the name of John Brough was brought forward with the powerful support of the *Gazette* and the *Commercial* of Cincinnati.<sup>20</sup> Brough, president of the Bellefontaine Line, a railroad from Indianapolis to Cleveland, had not been active in politics since the 1840's. As State auditor from 1839 to 1845, he had established a reputation as an efficient, incorruptible and fearless public official. He and his brother Charles had founded the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, but he had abandoned politics for railroad management in 1848 and had been forgotten by party leaders until shortly before the Union convention of 1863. A strong Union speech, delivered at his old home, Marietta, on June 10, received much favorable publicity, apparently prearranged, from Cincinnati Union party newspapers. They cooperated with the Cleveland radicals and their organ, the *Cleveland Leader*, in supporting him as a candidate to head off Governor Tod.<sup>21</sup> Since Brough was a resident of Cleveland, the movement had a popular appeal in the north, though he was not a radical. As in the case of the defeat of Judge Swan in 1859, the radicals of

<sup>18</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 113-4, 117-8.

<sup>19</sup> Gray, *The Hidden Civil War*, 143.

<sup>20</sup> George B. Wright, "Honorable David Tod," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, VIII (1900), 128-9.

<sup>21</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 119-20; *Cleveland Leader*, June 15, 16, 17, 1863.



the Reserve and the Cincinnati leaders joined forces to defeat a man who clearly deserved a second term.

The Union party leaders made every effort to have the convention, held at Columbus on June 17, draw a greater crowd than its Democratic rival of the preceding week. Whether they succeeded or not was a matter of dispute, but at least throngs of Union supporters poured into the capital city, and the *Ohio State Journal* asserted that the convention attracted the largest gathering ever assembled in Columbus.<sup>22</sup> Lewis D. Campbell, former Whig leader, presided as temporary chairman. The afternoon session was to have been held on the east terrace of the State House where the spectators could witness the proceedings but the congestion was so great that the delegates were forced to assemble at the Athenaeum to be able to conduct business. William Dennison was made permanent chairman. Soldier delegates from the armies in the field and from Camp Dennison were seated. When the ballot for governor was taken Brough had 216 votes to 193 for Tod. G. Volney Dorsey was re-nominated for State treasurer, but the other places were filled with new men. The brief platform, presented by Senator Wade, emphasized the need for a vigorous prosecution of the war and praised the President and Governor Tod, but ignored emancipation and contained nothing to which conservatives and War Democrats could take exception.

Tod was bitterly disappointed at the shabby treatment accorded him but loyally supported the ticket. The later course of events seemed to prove that he could have been easily re-elected. However, as in the case of Dennison, there was a feeling that a new man was needed. Tod had been a favorite target for Democratic guns and was not popular in his own party. Brough, remembered as the honest, efficient State auditor of the 1840's, had been out of politics for many years and had no record that needed to be defended.

The new Union party champion was a middle-aged, bearded, corpulent, untidy-looking man, who chewed tobacco incessantly

<sup>22</sup> Joseph P. Smith, *History of the Republican Party in Ohio* (Chicago, 1898), I, 155-60.

and was not overly temperate in other respects, in appearance and personal habits the antithesis of the handsome and puritanical Vallandigham. But he was a powerful speaker and every whit as courageous as his rival, while people admired his integrity, his honesty, and his flaming patriotism.

Gettysburg, Vicksburg and Morgan's raid thrust politics into the background in mid-summer, but the campaign came into its own by September, and the struggle grew in bitterness as the October election approached. Daniel W. Voorhees and Thomas A. Hendricks came from Indiana and Thomas H. Seymour from Connecticut to augment the local Democratic spellbinders headed by Pugh, candidate for lieutenant-governor, and including Thurman, Pendleton, Medary, Cox, Allen and others. On the Union side Brough, Tod, Dennison, Wade, Sherman and lesser figures were aided by two famous war governors, Richard Yates of Illinois and Oliver P. Morton of Indiana, while Secretary Chase returned to his native State shortly before the election to do his part.<sup>23</sup>

The Democrats assumed the offensive and charged that the administration had violated the Constitution, destroyed freedom of speech and was attempting to set up a military despotism. They assailed emancipation and confiscation as altering the character of the war, and some of them reiterated their exiled leader's belief that the war was a failure and that only through peaceful means could the Union be restored. The peace issue weakened the Democratic appeal, for even the outward enthusiasm for Vallandigham could not cover up the failure of such Douglas Democrats as Ranney, Payne and Jewett to participate in the campaign. Union party orators struck their most telling blows by charging that the Democrats were anti-war and pro-southern, that Vallandigham was a convicted traitor, and that his election would be a mortal blow to the cause of the Union. When Pugh declared that fifty thousand armed Ohioans would march to the Canadian border and escort Vallandigham to the State House, if he were elected, Unionists used

<sup>23</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 178-85; Hubbart, *Older Middle West*, 213-7; Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1902), I, 445-8.

this as proof that his success would mean the outbreak of civil war in the Northwest.

Meetings on both sides drew unprecedented crowds; and parades, banners and partisan songs added to the excitement. Fortunately, there were few acts of violence apart from the occasional individual encounters and drunken brawls inevitably associated with mass demonstrations. A "Vallandigham Song Book" provided a vent for Copperhead emotions with such denunciatory stanzas as this:

"We are coming, Abraham Lincoln,  
From mountain, wood and glen  
We are coming, Abraham Lincoln,  
With the ghosts of murdered men.  
Yes, we're coming, Abraham Lincoln,  
With curses loud and deep,  
That will haunt you in your waking  
And disturb you in your sleep." <sup>24</sup>

"Mountain, wood and glen" seemed literally to be pouring forth their "butternut" Democracy, for the rural masses of the isolated and backward areas were rallying to Vallandigham's candidacy. Poorly educated, narrow, individualistic, resentful toward the draft, taxes, abolitionists and Negroes, they thronged to Democratic meetings on horseback, in wagons and afoot to hear appeals to emotions and prejudices and to shout defiance at Lincoln, Tod, Burnside, and their hirelings. In the cities the Democratic appeal was most effective among the unskilled Irish laborers who resented Negro competition, were affronted by the draft and, unaffected by the war, had persisted in their sentimental loyalty to a party that had fought nativism and anti-liquor legislation, and whose urban leaders had organized and cherished the Celtic vote. Thus there was the suggestion of a class division in the battle of 1863.

In the Union party were the more educated and prosperous, both in city and country. A war-time boom for railroad, factory and farm had ended the economic depression that followed the outbreak of hostilities, while the opening of the Mississippi by the

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Hubbart, *Older Middle West*, 213-4.

capture of Vicksburg refuted one of the strongest arguments of the "Vallandighammers." Yet it would be unfair to attribute Unionist zeal to mounting profits. The crusading spirit was still strong in the old Republican ranks, and among the professional classes and the intellectuals the tax burdens and inflated prices of a war economy meant sacrifices and hardships. If economic considerations operated here they did not imply any expectation of immediate gains but rather the ultimate benefits to nation and section from a Union victory and a fear of the consequences that might come from defeat.

The Protestant clergy, voicing the feelings of their congregations, were so strongly Unionist that many of them prayed for a Brough victory. The resentful Democratic minority in some churches seceded, and for a time a Christian Union Church was in existence to minister to the spiritual needs of the anti-war groups. The *Western Christian Advocate* of the Methodist Episcopal Church became practically a Union party organ, and "peace" Methodists had to fall in line or depart.<sup>25</sup>

The results of the election astonished both sides. Brough had 288,374 votes to Vallandigham's 187,492, a majority of 100,882. The soldiers in the field gave the former 41,467 votes to 2,288 for the Democratic candidate.<sup>26</sup> Without the soldier support Brough still had a lead of 61,703 votes. The tremendous total vote, the largest cast in the State to that time, indicated the widespread interest in the contest. Despite the crowds and the enthusiasm the Democrats had carried but eighteen counties, the majority in the northern and central parts of the State.

The overwhelming Union victory was a shattering blow to Copperheadism as a political force and a ringing indorsement of the war. There were rejoicings all over the North and Lincoln, who had been getting the returns by wire on election night, sent this message to Brough early the next morning: "Glory to God in the Highest. Ohio has saved the Union."<sup>27</sup> Gideon Welles, Secre-

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 215-6; Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 189.

<sup>26</sup> Smith, *Republican Party*, I, 161-2.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel J. Ryan, *Lincoln and Ohio* (Columbus, 1923), 212.





# ELECTION *for* GOVERNOR

## 1863

Unionist Counties Shaded  
Democratic Counties Unshaded

tary of the Navy, tells in his diary of the President's anxiety over the Ohio election and his relief at the outcome. Yet he was disturbed that so many had voted for Vallandigham, "a vote that is a discredit to the country."<sup>28</sup>

The armies in the field had eagerly awaited news of the election. At Chattanooga, where many Ohio troops were concentrated, Confederate pickets had made daily inquiries of their Union opponents as to how the election was going. "And at midnight of the 13th of October, when the telegraphic news was flashed down to us, and it was announced to the army that the Union had sixty thousand majority in Ohio, there arose a shout from every tent along the line on that rainy midnight, which rent the skies with jubilees, and sent despair to the hearts of those who were waiting and watching across the border."<sup>29</sup>

There were Democratic charges of gross frauds practiced by the victors, but this could hardly account for a majority of such proportions. The swing to the Union party was too general throughout the State to be accounted for by illegal tactics. Gettysburg and Vicksburg and the fear of civil war in Ohio if Vallandigham won are more reasonable explanations.

While the political campaign was just getting under way in July, 1863, the war had come to Ohio with startling suddenness.<sup>30</sup> Brigadier-General John Morgan, the Kentucky cavalry leader under General Bragg, dashed northward with about 3,000 horsemen, reached the Ohio River below Louisville on July 8, and then crossed into southern Indiana, thereby violating the instructions of his superior who had ordered him to remain south of the river. After spreading rumors that he planned to attack Indianapolis, he headed across southern Indiana toward Cincinnati, avoiding the Indiana militia sent to intercept him. Governor Tod called out the partly organized militia of the southern counties on the night of July 12, but Morgan was crossing the boundary into Ohio before

<sup>28</sup> *Diary of Gideon Welles* (Boston and New York, 1911), I, 469-70.

<sup>29</sup> Speech of Garfield, quoted in Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 761.

<sup>30</sup> For accounts of the raid, see *ibid.*, 134-52; Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, I, 494-509; L. J. Weber, "Morgan's Raid", *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XVIII (1909), 79-104.

most Ohioans learned of the governor's proclamation. With great daring the Confederate raider took his forces through the suburbs of Cincinnati at night and early in the morning of July 14 rested his horses near Camp Dennison, where he had a slight skirmish with the small detachment of regulars there. Federal cavalry under Brigadier-General E. H. Hobson had been pursuing Morgan from the time he had left Kentucky, while General Burnside was assembling troops on the Ohio to prevent the Confederates from escaping across the river.

The raid now lost all military significance and became a game of hare-and-hounds with Morgan trying to elude his pursuers long enough to make a safe crossing of the Ohio. From Williamsburg, Clermont County, the raiders in two divisions crossed a dozen southern counties before reaching a ford at Buffington Island. At the village of Portland, Meigs County, they were delayed over night by a small earthwork, which they found abandoned the next morning. But Hobson's men had now caught up with Morgan, and other forces under General H. M. Judah, brought up by boat, cut off his advance, while gunboats commanded the ford. In the fighting that followed on July 19 Morgan was defeated but escaped with about twelve hundred men. He found a ford twenty miles up the river and three hundred of his weary troopers succeeded in crossing before the gunboats arrived. Then the game of hide-and-seek was resumed as Morgan again sought a way of escape. Cut off from the Ohio he turned up the Muskingum, crossed it at Eagleport above McConnelsville, headed northeast through half a dozen eastern counties, and was finally brought to bay near Salineville, Columbiana County, on July 26 by Major W. B. Way of the Ninth Michigan Cavalry and Major G. W. Rue of the Ninth Kentucky Cavalry.

Morgan surrendered first to a civilian guide on condition that he and his men be paroled, but Major Rue refused to recognize the propriety of this act. Governor Tod denied that the guide was a State militia officer and upheld the military authorities. Consequently Morgan and his men were not paroled but were sent to prison camps. The officers were confined in the Ohio Penitentiary as a retaliatory measure for similar treatment accorded certain Fed-



eral officers in the South. After a few months in prison, Morgan and six others escaped from the penitentiary on the night of November 27, apparently by tunneling under the building and then climbing the outer wall with ropes made of their bed-clothes. Morgan audaciously went by train to Cincinnati, crossed the Ohio, and was soon within the Confederate lines.

The military value of the raid was slight.<sup>31</sup> It cost Confederate General Braxton Bragg a whole division of cavalry, and while it drew Federal forces away from other service in Kentucky, the Confederates were unable to take any advantage of this diversion. Morgan captured no military posts north of the Ohio, destroyed no railroads or supply depots, and inflicted damage only on civilians. The horses and food seized were military necessities, but other property taken by the raiders was due to their plundering propensities. Whatever struck a man's fancy, he seized, often discarding it after a few miles to replace it with something else that happened to catch his eye. Bolts of calico were greatly prized, and, of course, jewelry and silverware were valuable plunder. Some of the loot—shoes, stockings, corsets, gloves—was intended for the wives or sweethearts of the raiders, but much of what was taken was not worth the added burden it put on their weary horses. Yet the State of Ohio found that the total claims for damages presented to a board of commissioners appointed for the purpose amounted to \$678,915.03 from 4,375 claimants.<sup>32</sup> The commissioners allowed claims amounting to \$576,225, though for many years additional or disapproved claims were being presented to the assembly for action. Since the expense of putting the militia in the field was \$450,000, the raid cost the State over a million dollars.

Along the trail of the raid sprouted a crop of anecdotes that grew with the telling until they became community traditions. Some told of deeds of valor or deceptions whereby the bold raiders were outwitted, but more dealt with the ridiculous actions of individuals thrown into a panic by the spell of Morgan's name. They told of bridges burned over fordable streams miles from the path of the

<sup>31</sup> Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, I, 508-9.

<sup>32</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 150-2.



raider, of obstructions placed over roads he had already traversed, of bullets fired by panic-stricken citizens at other equally panic-stricken citizens, of valuables concealed in strange and unusual places and of other weird incidents. In this wise, Morgan's raid in time was magnified to the proportions of a legend, and yet a kindly legend, unmarred by the horrible barbarities so often associated with war. Morgan's men stole and confiscated and fought, but murder and rapine did not darken the picture. The "horse thieves," after all, were easier for loyal Unionists to forgive than the Copperheads.

On January 11, 1864, John Brough replaced David Tod as governor. The latter had carried the burdens of office during two of the most critical years of the State's history and had given the Lincoln Administration a loyal and vigorous support. Fortunately his successor was a man of equal stature. John Brough was plain, blunt, outspoken, devoid of pretense and undiplomatic to the point of rudeness. Honest and capable, this self-made man had been successively printer, public official, lawyer, editor and railroad executive, and was now to devote his energy and talents to the service of his State. His wide experience and his natural vigor made him essentially a man of action, who hated inefficiency, red tape, procrastination. Shrewd in his judgments of others, he tended to be harsh with those who did not measure up to his high standards and to see humanity in blacks and whites. He found it difficult to make allowances for misdeeds and frailties, and as a consequence made enemies more rapidly than he won friends. Essentially kind-hearted, he gave a ready ear to the complaints of soldiers over mistreatment or neglect, and sometimes acted too precipitately without waiting to investigate thoroughly. Federal hospitals where Ohio troops were confined were objects of particular attention and the righteous wrath of the governor lashed out at officials whom he regarded as negligent or incompetent.<sup>33</sup>

Brough's first accomplishment was to secure the levying by the General Assembly of increased taxes for the aid of soldiers' fami-

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 194-9, for illustrations of Brough's methods.

lies. He favored a four-mill tax but the assembly provided for a State levy of two mills on the dollar, a county levy of one mill, at the option of the county commissioners, and a municipal levy of half a mill, if the city council authorized it. Where the local officials who distributed the funds were negligent, the governor, acting under the law, put his own appointees in charge. The funds were largely exhausted before the next winter, but the governor then appealed to the county military committees to use the Saturday after Thanksgiving as a day for the collection of fuel, food, clothing and money in every town for distribution to needy families of soldiers. In this wise, private charity supplemented State aid. The State agencies, referred to earlier, were carefully supervised by the governor and their soldier welfare work expanded, sometimes over the objections of the United States Sanitary Commission.<sup>34</sup>

The recruiting problem grew more difficult as the war went on. Tod had managed to keep the State ahead of its quotas in 1863 but the heavy demands of 1864—four calls for men—made drafting necessary.<sup>35</sup> Efforts of communities to avoid it by bounties led to the evils of bounty jumping, desertions and the procurement of substitutes by brokers. Even so, the draft was used in many places, though often the recruits never reached the front. Brough disliked the whole bounty system and was almost alone among state governors in urging Secretary of War Stanton not to postpone the draft scheduled for April 1.<sup>36</sup>

In connection with the draft came rumors that the Order of American Knights, or Sons of Liberty, was planning an armed uprising. Secret agents of the governor reported that Copperheads were organizing and arming in the summer of 1864 to resist the draft and even to seize arsenals, release Confederate prisoners, and inaugurate a rebellion.<sup>37</sup> However, the return of the National Guard from federal service, the vigilance of State authorities and the willingness of the conspirators to postpone the day of action when-

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-94.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 200-1.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 205; Shannon, *Union Army*, II, 125.

<sup>37</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 202-4; Hubbart, *Older Middle West*, 226-9; Benton, "Peace Movement," 54 ff.

ever it was at hand prevented any trouble. Probably the danger was much exaggerated. Vallandigham, in February, 1864, had been elected as supreme commander of the secret order, but he denied that it had any treasonous purposes.

Most fantastic of all was the plan of Confederate agents to release the prisoners at Johnson's Island in Sandusky Bay. If it succeeded, the prisoners were to seize a railroad train, proceed to Columbus, and release the Confederates at Camp Chase. Presumably some Sons of Liberty would assist. Thus a Confederate army would go into action in Ohio. Just when the first step was about to be taken—the seizure of the gunboat *Michigan* at Sandusky—the chief agent, Captain Charles H. Cole, was arrested and the plot disclosed.<sup>38</sup>

Brough's most notable accomplishment was the calling out of the hundred days' men. Believing that the war could be ended by the close of the summer of 1864 if enough men could be put into the field, he proposed at a meeting of northwestern state governors at Washington that each state supply a quota of men for one hundred days, to be used chiefly for garrison or guard duty, thus releasing regulars for field service. The governors agreed, the President accepted the plan and the call went forth. Brough, through his efficient Adjutant-General, Benjamin R. Cowen, summoned the newly organized National Guard for this work. The driving energy of the governor put 35,982 men into federal service within sixteen days. No other state was so prompt. Only one company refused to serve, and it was dishonorably dismissed from the National Guard. The hundred days' men performed a useful service, mostly behind the lines, but their contribution did not enable the government to bring the war to an end by autumn, as Brough had hoped. However, he had done his part.<sup>39</sup>

Tod's difficulties with Ohio officers over promotions were duplicated by Brough. The power of the governor to promote regimental officers, regardless of their merits or the opinions of their superiors, was bound to cause trouble. Tod had decided each case according to its special circumstances, but Brough, more methodical, followed

<sup>38</sup> E. O. Randall and D. J. Ryan, *History of Ohio* (New York, 1912), 271-8.

<sup>39</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 208-20.

the rule of seniority, leaving it to the War Department to get rid of incompetents. The higher officers resented the regulation as it meant that their recommendations as to promotions would carry no weight with the governor. Soon there were altercations over this and other matters in which Brough tended to support lower officers against higher ones and privates against officers. He gave ear to complaints and sometimes wrote to colonels for explanations of their actions in language that was blunt, if not discourteous. Unmindful of official dignity and military etiquette, he was intent on seeing that justice was done, though the military heavens fell. Usually he was right, but those who had felt the sting of his rebukes drew together, and the officers' caste was ready to oppose his renomination when he decided to retire.<sup>40</sup>

The presidential election of 1864 was a kind of anticlimax in Ohio after the bitter struggle of 1863. With Copperheadism overwhelmed and the State government in Union hands for two more years, the Union party seemed reasonably certain to carry Ohio, and the voters could not be aroused to the pitch of excitement that had marked the Vallandigham struggle. Chief interest in the Union party camp centered at first in the more or less undercover movement to make Ohio's favorite son of 1860, Salmon P. Chase, the party nominee instead of Abraham Lincoln.<sup>41</sup> Chase, blinded by his presidential ambitions, could not appreciate the greatness of his chief and let himself be convinced that the welfare of the Nation required his presence in the White House. He wrote hundreds of letters to correspondents in various parts of the country in 1862 and 1863 deprecating the mistakes of the Administration and its want of vigor. With the large amount of patronage of the Treasury Department at his disposal and the support of Republican radicals and malcontents, who felt that Lincoln was a weakling, he seemed in a strong position at the beginning of the year 1864. However, Denison, Delano and other leading Ohio Union party men were ready to checkmate Chase in his home State.

His candidacy was launched at Washington by Senator Samuel

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 221-30.

<sup>41</sup> Donnal V. Smith, *Chase and Civil War Politics* (Columbus, 1931), 70 ff.



C. Pomeroy of Kansas, chairman of a group of radicals in Congress calling themselves the "Republican National Executive Committee." The "Pomeroy Circular," appearing in the newspapers on February 22, declared Lincoln's re-election impossible and undesirable and pronounced in favor of Chase.<sup>42</sup> Already the Lincoln and Chase forces in Ohio had been engaged in preliminary maneuvering, particularly over the question of a legislative indorsement of Lincoln. Chase's friends kept such a resolution from being considered during the early weeks of the session, and the Lincoln supporters led by Columbus Delano, now a member of the House, did not press the issue at a Union legislative caucus. But the Pomeroy Circular brought matters to a head, and a caucus held on February 25 indorsed Lincoln. About 80 of the 109 Union party members of the assembly were reported as present, and most of these were Lincoln men. Some accounts put the number who voted at sixty-three. The few Chase supporters in attendance withdrew after failing to secure a postponement of action and later claimed that those who voted for the resolution were not a majority of the Union legislative membership.<sup>43</sup> But the indorsement of Lincoln went forth as the sentiment of the party in Ohio, which was quite evidently the case. Since the Indiana Union convention had just taken similar action, Chase chose to withdraw his name as a candidate. However, neither he nor his lieutenants regarded this announcement as closing the door on his chances. The delegates to the national convention might yet decide to draft him.

Senator John Sherman and Representative James A. Garfield, who had been members of the committee that had sponsored the Pomeroy Circular, now dropped the Ohio candidate and accepted Lincoln as their choice. The Union State convention met at Columbus on May 25 and nominated Dennison, Tod, Dorsey and Delano as delegates-at-large to the Union national convention. All were loyal Lincoln men. The platform indorsed Lincoln for re-nomination, praised his administration, and expressed approval

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-20.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 110-1, 122-3; Elizabeth F. Yager, "The Presidential Campaign of 1864 in Ohio," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XXXIV (1925), 551-5.

of the pending amendment to the Constitution to abolish slavery. A blanket indorsement of the ability, fidelity and patriotism of Ohio "in the Cabinet, in the field and in the councils of the Nation" was as far as the resolutions committee would go in soothing Chase's feelings. Nominations were made for supreme judge and several other State offices.<sup>44</sup>

At the Union national convention at Baltimore in June Ohio supplied the permanent chairman, former Governor Dennison, and its delegation voted solidly for Lincoln for President and Andrew Johnson of Tennessee for Vice President.

Mid-summer saw the two leading Ohio radicals break with the President.<sup>45</sup> Chase, angry over a matter of patronage in New York, offered his resignation, and the President surprised him by accepting it. Governor Brough, who was in Washington at the time, tried to patch up the difficulty but Lincoln had decided that he could get along without the troublesome Ohioan. He offered the place to another Ohioan, David Tod, apparently on the advice of Dennison and Delano, but he refused it. Wade, joint author, with Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, of a radical reconstruction measure for the South, was so aroused over Lincoln's pocket veto of the bill that he joined with Davis in issuing a manifesto savagely attacking the President.

Soon after this a movement for the elimination of Lincoln as the party's candidate got under way.<sup>46</sup> The military stalemate, radical dislike of Lincoln and the fear of some conservatives that Lincoln could not command the united support of the party against a strong Democratic candidate explain the movement. General John C. Fremont had already been nominated by a little group of extremists at a national convention held at Cleveland on May 21, in which a number of radical Germans took a leading part. If both Fremont and Lincoln would withdraw, it was argued, a strong candidate, perhaps Chase, could be substituted who could unite all factions.

<sup>44</sup> Smith, *Republican Party*, I, 190-3.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, *Chase and Civil War Politics*, 144-7; Tyler Dennett, *Lincoln and the Civil War in the Diaries and Letters of John Hay*, 198-201.

<sup>46</sup> Smith, *Chase and Civil War Politics*, 147 ff.

Richard Smith of the *Cincinnati Gazette* participated in the movement, and Wade, of course, was deeply involved. But with early September came the news of the capture of Atlanta and Sheridan's victories in the Shenandoah Valley, and the anti-Lincoln movement caved in. Fremont withdrew, Lincoln removed Postmaster-General Montgomery Blair as a sop to the radicals, and Wade and Chase both went on the stump for the man they had so recently criticised and opposed. Thus was harmony restored in the Union party ranks. Incidentally, the departure of Blair put an Ohioan in the Cabinet as postmaster-general, Dennison's steady loyalty being thus rewarded.

Meanwhile, the Ohio Democracy, having burnt its fingers with Copperheadism in 1863, was becoming more conservative. The peace faction was still strong but the war group led by Ranney, Payne and Jewett was ready to assert itself. At the State convention of March 23, held at Columbus, there was little difficulty in dividing the places on the State ticket but the choice of delegates to the national convention was more of a problem. Allen, Thurman and Pendleton were nominated in that order. Ranney, Vallandigham and Medary came next but lacked a majority. On the second ballot Ranney had 216½, Vallandigham 211½, William M. Corry 1. The Vallandigham men insisted on a recount but the result was the same. The moderates had the upper hand. The platform was milder and more ambiguous than in 1863.<sup>47</sup>

Vallandigham startled friends as well as enemies by returning secretly to his home and appearing suddenly before the Democratic district convention at Hamilton. The members at once chose him as their delegate to the national convention. He was not molested by federal authorities. Union newspapers welcomed his return from exile for the embarrassment it would cause his party, and Lincoln took much the same view.<sup>48</sup>

At the Chicago convention he was a center of interest and his influence was, in part, responsible for the plank in the platform declaring the war a failure and demanding a cessation of hostilities in

<sup>47</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 192-4; Yager, "Campaign of 1864 in Ohio," 556-9.

<sup>48</sup> Dennett, *Diary and Letters of Hay*, 192-3.

order to restore the Union by peaceful means. But the nomination of General George B. McClellan, strongly supported by the war faction, seemed to give the lie to the platform. Ohio gave six of its twenty-one votes to Thomas H. Seymour of Connecticut, the rest to McClellan, but the certainty of McClellan's nomination accounted for the result. An informal poll of the delegation at first gave McClellan 17, Thomas H. Seymour 21, Horatio Seymour of New York 4, the forty-two delegates voting as individuals. Thus the peace element had half of the delegation. Ohio received the vice-presidential nomination, George H. Pendleton being named on the second ballot.<sup>49</sup>

A left-wing peace group now considered the question of a bolt. Its leading figure was Alexander Long, Cincinnati member of Congress, who had gone beyond Vallandigham in his anti-war views.<sup>50</sup> In the House he had advocated an immediate end to the war and the recognition of the independence of the South, if re-union could not be brought about peacefully. He accepted the "peace-with-union" plank of the Chicago platform, though he would have gone beyond that to the extreme of peace at any price. McClellan was not the choice of the peace men, and his letter of acceptance, which virtually repudiated the platform, confirmed their worst fears. Vallandigham, who had gone on the stump for McClellan, cancelled his appointments. After reflecting over the matter for two weeks, he decided to resume his speaking tour. McClellan, he felt, had only expressed his private views; he would abide by the platform, if elected. Medary was too ill to take part in a bolt but he refused to indorse McClellan in the *Crisis*. The Cincinnati *Enquirer*, which had become an anti-war organ, swallowed the Chicago ticket, perhaps because of Pendleton.<sup>51</sup>

But Long, William M. Corry of Cincinnati and other radical peace men prepared to bolt. A mass convention assembled at Cincinnati, October 18, with fifty delegates from Ohio, Indiana, Illi-

<sup>49</sup> Smith, *Republican Party*, I, 180-5, gives a careful account of the convention's proceedings.

<sup>50</sup> Hubbard, *Older Middle West*, 231-3; Gray, *Hidden Civil War*, 160-2.

<sup>51</sup> Yager, "Campaign of 1864 in Ohio," 564-6.



nois and Iowa. The resolutions favored unconditional peace, expressed an extreme state rights viewpoint, upheld Negro slavery as the only solution of the southern labor problem and repudiated McClellan. Long refused the presidential nomination, and the movement came to nothing.<sup>52</sup>

The campaign was a short one and not very exciting. The harmony in the Union party ranks and the heartening effect of military victories was in sharp contrast with the confusion of tongues on the Democratic side. Democratic speakers were for peace or war, depending on their own convictions or the neighborhood in which they spoke. Around Cleveland they were pro-war; in the Scioto Valley, the peace note was sounded. Original McClellan men such as Ranney, Samuel S. Cox and General George W. Morgan cooperated with Vallandigham, Thurman and Allen in this bifocal campaign against the party in power. As the peace issue was refuted by the work of Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Admiral Farragut, it was safer to assail the policies of the administration, to raise the spectre of Negro equality, and to play up McClellan's alleged mistreatment at the hands of Lincoln. Indeed, the savage personal attacks on Lincoln surpassed the bounds of decency. As the Great Emancipator himself expressed it to John Hay: "It is a little singular that I, who am not a vindictive man, should have always been before the people for election in canvasses marked for their bitterness."<sup>53</sup> But malice was foreign to his nature.

William Allen must have regretted afterward his intemperate partisanship in 1864 when he uttered these remarks: "We don't want a cold-blooded joker at Washington who, while the District of Columbia is infested with hospitals, and the atmosphere burdened by the groans and sighs of our mangled countrymen, when he can spare a minute from Joe Miller's Jest Book looks out upon the acres of hospitals and inquires 'What houses are those?'"<sup>54</sup> The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* referred to the President as "a miserable failure, a coarse filthy joker, a disgusting politician, a mean, cun-

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 566-7; Gray, *Hidden Civil War*, 200-1.

<sup>53</sup> Dennett, *Diary and Letters of Hay*, 233.

<sup>54</sup> Reginald C. McGrane, *William Allen* (Columbus, 1925), 168-9.

ning and cruel tyrant and the shame and disgrace of the nation.”<sup>55</sup> The dictatorship theme was wrung dry. Said the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, in urging people to vote, “It may be the last polls to receive the votes of freemen.” It spoke of “the chariots and kingly crown,” “the threatened extinguishment of the experiment of free government.”<sup>56</sup>

The Union party, its summer defeatism dispelled by military successes, turned celebrations of victories into party rallies. The three war governors, Dennison, Tod and Brough, Senators Wade and Sherman, and Chase, with the chief justiceship of the United States Supreme Court dangling before him, provided the oratorical artillery. The October State and congressional elections were a sweeping victory for the Union party. Its candidates won seventeen of the nineteen congressional seats and the State ticket triumphed by majorities around 54,000 votes. The greatest Democratic loss was the failure of Samuel S. Cox, Democratic floor leader in the national House, to win re-election from the capital city district. After four consecutive victories he was defeated for a fifth term. In November Lincoln carried Ohio by 60,055 votes, over half of this represented by the soldier vote.<sup>57</sup>

The war's political struggles ended when the Thirteenth Amendment passed Congress in January, 1865. With this the triumphant Union party ended the slavery issue, and the ratification of the amendment removed it as a political question. At Governor Brough's recommendation it was approved by the Ohio General Assembly in February by large majorities in both houses. In Congress only one Ohio Democrat had voted for it.<sup>58</sup> The firing of two hundred guns in the State House yard celebrated the State's ratification of the abolition of slavery.

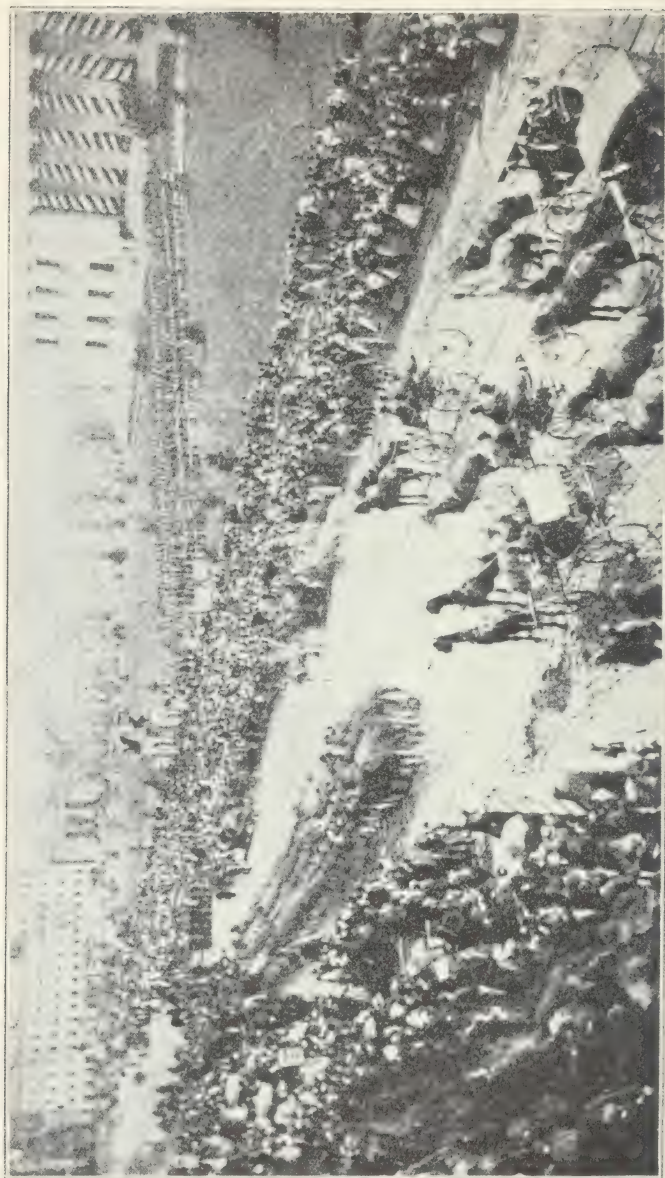
More spontaneous was the celebration of Sunday, April 9, when the news of the surrender of General Lee at Appomattox was flashed over the country. Cannon roared, bells were rung, bonfires blazed

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Yager, “Campaign of 1864 in Ohio,” 571-2.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 572-3.

<sup>57</sup> Smith, *Republican Party*, I, 195-6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 200; *House Journal*, 38 Cong., 2 Sess., 170-1.



14. LINCOLN OBSEQUIES. FUNERAL PROCESSION, COLUMBUS



everywhere. More formal celebrations came later in the week with public meetings, parades, decorations and illuminations. At Columbus on the night of April 14 a speech by John Sherman, songs, a torchlight parade and a brilliant illumination of the State House featured the gala occasion.<sup>59</sup>

The celebration had scarcely ended before word came of the mad act of John Wilkes Booth, and city and State were plunged into gloom. Lincoln's amazing popularity with the common man, perplexing to party leaders and little understood by short-sighted newspaper editors, was made evident by the news of his death. The crowd that gathered at the religious services in the State House yard on the next Sunday afternoon was larger even than the throngs that had fought to shake his hand a little more than four years before.<sup>60</sup>

The passage of the Lincoln funeral train through Ohio was a memorable event in the history of the State. The elaborate ceremonies at Cleveland and Columbus, the decorated buildings and the long processions that followed the hearse might seem in questionable taste to later generations, unaccustomed to the pageantry of nineteenth century funerals, but this was not a public display of sentimentality. Behind it lay the deep and genuine grief of the people for a beloved leader. More than fifty thousand, passing in seemingly endless procession for six and a half hours, gazed at Lincoln's remains in the rotunda of the State House. Double that number had viewed the body at Cleveland. Huge bonfires were burning at every station and crowds waited for hours during the night to catch a glimpse of the funeral train as it sped toward the Indiana line. Each stop, however brief, was marked by some ceremony, and depots were draped in mourning. At one place an arch of evergreens had been erected over the track.<sup>61</sup>

The demobilization of the armies began soon after the end of hostilities, and from June, 1865, to July, 1866, Ohio troops were being mustered out, the largest numbers at Tod Barracks and Camp

<sup>59</sup> Lee, *Columbus*, II, 148-9.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 151-5; Ryan, *Lincoln and Ohio*, 223-80. The procession stopped in Cleveland on April 28 and in Columbus on April 29.





15. OHIO GENERALS IN THE WAR (I)



16. OHIO GENERALS IN THE WAR (II)

Chase, Columbus. The latter place had been used as a prison for Confederates and contained 3,200 on June 10, 1865.<sup>62</sup> Most of them now took the oath of allegiance, and by June 28 the last had departed. Many of those released were reported as seeking employment in or near the capital city.

In the summer of 1865 Generals Grant and Sherman both came back to their native State for brief visits and were given the welcome accorded conquering heroes.<sup>63</sup> Forgotten were the newspaper stories of Sherman's insanity in 1861 and the rumors of Grant's drunkenness on the field of battle. Ohio was now proudly claiming them as her own, though neither had actually resided in the State for many years. Among Ohioans by birth or residence who held high rank in the military service were Philip H. Sheridan, Irvin McDowell, William S. Rosecrans, Don Carlos Buell, Quincy A. Gilmore, James B. McPherson, Ormsby M. Mitchell, George A. Custer, Jacob D. Cox, James A. Garfield and Robert C. Schenck. McClellan is sometimes included, as he was residing in Cincinnati when appointed to command Ohio's volunteers.

The total number of Ohioans in military service during the war is a matter of dispute. Whitelaw Reid accepted the figures of the United States Provost-Marshal-General as correct and put the total at 310,654.<sup>64</sup> Of these, 8,750 were raised by draft. He did not count re-enlistments, those who enlisted from other states, those who paid commutation money to escape the draft, and some other irregular groups, such as the 5,092 Negro troops either credited to other states or to the "United States Colored Troops." The Ohio adjutant-general, by counting such classes, credited the State with 346,326 by December 1, 1864. The official records of the War Department tabulate for Ohio 313,180 troops and 6,479 commutations. These figures, reduced to a three-year enlistment standard, give a total of 240,514.<sup>65</sup> By any count Ohio ranked third among the states in numbers of men furnished for military service.

<sup>62</sup> Lee, *Columbus*, II, 157.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 164-6.

<sup>64</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, II, 3-4.

<sup>65</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series III, Vol. IV (Washington, 1900), p. 1269. •

Space limitations prevent the inclusion of accounts of the military exploits of the various Ohio units in the field but their contributions may be summarized by quoting Whitelaw Reid's glowing tribute:<sup>66</sup>

"They fought on well-nigh every battle-field of the war. Within forty-eight hours after the telegraphic call, two Ohio regiments were on their way to the rescue of the imperiled capital in the spring of 1861. An Ohio brigade, in good order, covered the retreat from the first Bull Run. Ohio troops formed the bulk of the army that saved West Virginia; the bulk of the army that saved Kentucky; a large share of the army that took Fort Donelson; a part of the army at Island No. 10; a great part of the army that, from Stone River, and Chickamauga, and Mission Ridge, and Kenesaw, and Atlanta, swept down to the sea and back through the Carolinas to the Old Dominion. They fought at Pea Ridge. They charged at Wagner. They campaigned against the Indians along the base of the Rocky Mountains. They helped to redeem North Carolina. They were in the siege of Vicksburg, the siege of Charleston, the siege of Richmond, the siege of Mobile. At Pittsburg Landing, at Antietam, at Gettysburg, at Corinth, in the Wilderness, before Nashville, at Five Forks, and Appomattox C. H., their bones, reposing on the fields they won, are a perpetually-binding pledge that no flag shall ever wave over these graves of our soldiers but the flag they fought to maintain."

The number killed or mortally wounded was 11,237; disease accounted for 13,354; and deserters numbered 18,354. There were 37 killed out of every thousand, 47 more died in hospitals, 71 more were discharged as disabled, and 44 deserted, according to Reid.<sup>67</sup>

In soldiers' relief work Ohio's record was excellent. Private organizations shared with the State agencies, referred to elsewhere, the chief burdens of this welfare work. Cleveland claimed the honor

<sup>66</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, II, 5-6. Volume II may be consulted for histories of military units; volume I for biographical sketches of the more important officers. Daniel J. Ryan, *The Civil War Literature of Ohio* (Cleveland, 1911), lists military histories.

<sup>67</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, II, 5, based on his total of enlistments. The figures for number of desertions are from Ella Lonn, *Desertion during the Civil War* (New York, 1928), 152. Reid's estimate is lower.



of forming the first association of this character in the country. April 20, 1861, a group of Cleveland women organized the "Soldiers' Aid Society of Northern Ohio," which later became a branch of the United States Sanitary Commission. Mrs. Rebecca Elliott Cromwell Rouse was chosen president and Mary Clark Brayton secretary.<sup>68</sup> In the trying days when recruits poured into camps that had neither shelter nor supplies, the Cleveland society collected blankets and warm clothing for them. Soon it was engaged in every variety of relief work. It remained under feminine management to the close of the war, unlike the Cincinnati and Columbus societies, which were organized and managed by men but with the assistance of women auxiliary groups who performed much of the work. In thousands of communities throughout the State branch societies collected supplies and funds, and sent them to one of the three central agencies. Most of the work was done by unpaid volunteers, the Cleveland officers even paying their own traveling expenses. The Cincinnati society had one salaried officer.<sup>69</sup>

Because of the size and wealth of the Queen City and its nearness to the front, it naturally took the lead in Ohio's war relief work. A branch of the United States Sanitary Commission, the chief agency for soldier welfare work, was organized at Cincinnati in November, 1861, with Robert W. Burnet as president. A Volunteer Aid Committee, set up earlier, merged with the society and all relief work centered in it. One of its notable achievements was the dispatch of a hospital boat with ten volunteer surgeons, thirty-six nurses, and quantities of medicine and supplies to Fort Donelson. It fitted out, or assisted in fitting out, thirty-two steamboats for hospital work during the war. It helped the government in establishing eight hospitals in Cincinnati and vicinity. It also set up a soldiers' home to provide food and lodging for soldiers passing through the city. A burial place in Spring Grove Cemetery was provided for the sol-

<sup>68</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, Apr. 21, 1861.

<sup>69</sup> Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 245-72, deals with the accomplishments of medical officers and relief societies. See also Lee, *Columbus*, II, 95, 120-1, 162-3, 176; L. P. Brockett and Mary C. Vaughan, *Woman's Work in the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1867), 491-2, 495-6, 540-52, 617-20, 683-90.

dier dead, the State assisting with funds, and records were kept of all interred there.

Both the Cincinnati and Cleveland branches of the Sanitary Commission held great fairs to raise funds for relief purposes. The Cincinnati fair, copied after a Chicago exposition of October, 1863, began on December 21, 1863, and lasted through the holidays. Two buildings, specially constructed for the purpose, and three other halls in downtown Cincinnati were devoted to exhibits, salesrooms and refreshment saloons. The fair netted \$235,406 to the Sanitary Commission. Only Pittsburgh and St. Louis, in proportion to population, did better, and they had the advantage of copying from the Cincinnati effort. The Cleveland fair, held in February, 1864, lasted sixteen days and had net receipts of \$78,000, a great achievement for a small city.

The United States Christian Commission had three branches in Ohio, at Cincinnati, Cleveland and Toledo. It supplied the soldiers with Bibles, books, magazines and other reading material, chiefly of a religious character, but it also ministered at times to their temporal wants. Agencies at Louisville and Nashville were especially helpful to Ohio's soldiers in the field.

Outside the field of organized relief, much was done by private charity. Local groups looked after soldiers' dependents, providing them with firewood, food and clothing. Ladies' aid societies of the churches served meals for soldiers and supplied them with whatever necessities they lacked. The troopers who chased Morgan's raiders across southern Indiana and Ohio rode through miles of fried chicken and hot biscuits. Every village had food ready for the Union cavalymen so that the pursuit would not be delayed.<sup>70</sup> Never have Ohioans shown a greater spirit of self-sacrifice than in the days of the great civil struggle. With husbands, brothers and sons in uniform, few were the families that could view with indifference the calls for assistance from the war burdened, the wounded and the suffering, or ignore the needs of the men who were enduring the hardships of active service.

<sup>70</sup> "John Morgan Raid in Ohio," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XVII (1908), 51-2.

## CHAPTER XV

# Post-War Politics

**F**ORESEEING that there might be obstacles in the way of a re-nomination, Governor Brough declined to allow his name to be offered to the Union convention. However, death did not permit him even to finish his term. A severe ankle sprain forced him to use a cane, and his weight, since he was quite obese, apparently produced an inflamed condition in both hand and foot. Doubtless his physical condition was impaired from other causes, as gangrene presently developed. Two months of suffering ended in death on August 29, 1865.<sup>1</sup> The strong-willed, courageous governor, one of Ohio's ablest chief executives, thus survived but a few months the war-time President he had so loyally supported. Rumor had it that Brough was to have succeeded Edwin M. Stanton in the War Department if Lincoln had lived. Lieutenant-Governor Charles Anderson, once a staunch Whig, occupied the governor's office for the rest of Brough's term.

The war and the years immediately following saw the older Republican and Unionist leaders displaced by a younger group. Giddings died in 1864, and Corwin a year later. Wade was defeated for re-election as a result of the overturn of 1867. Chase, now Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, attempted to secure the Democratic nomination for the presidency in 1868, thereby divorcing himself from his old political associations. David Tod died in 1868. William Dennison, after retiring from the cabinet in 1866, appeared as a delegate in party conventions but was ornamental rather than active. That Whig veteran, Thomas Ewing the elder, a Unionist during the war, supported President Johnson's policies and lost his political influence. He died in 1871. His son,

<sup>1</sup> Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio in the War* (Columbus, 1893), I, 236-7.

General Thomas Ewing, became one of the leaders of the Democratic party.

Senator John Sherman and three war products, Jacob D. Cox, Rutherford B. Hayes and James A. Garfield, were the Republican party favorites in the post-war years.<sup>2</sup> Sherman's industry and perseverance gained him a reputation as one of the Senate's authorities on finance and later he served as secretary of the treasury under President Hayes. But while his steady party regularity and avoidance of extremes made him available for the presidential office, he never aroused any great enthusiasm or enjoyed a large personal following. His sober, colorless personality and the presence of strong rivals in his home State were serious obstacles in his path. His lack of a military record was also a handicap.

The post-war years saw the emergence of the soldier element as the dominating factor in Ohio politics. Beginning in 1865, for over a generation, the governors until 1904, with but four exceptions, were war veterans. Every Republican candidate down to 1903, except William West in 1877 and Charles Foster in 1879 and 1881, had a military record. Lesser offices reveal a similar situation.

Of the Ohioans whose military reputations furthered their public careers, Major-General Jacob Dolson Cox was in many respects the ablest. His Oberlin education had contributed to make him a pre-war radical in politics but there was no fanaticism in his make-up. Widely read, cultured, scholarly, a writer of clarity and force, particularly on military topics, and a skilful speaker, he had an unusually strong grasp of public problems and a judicious approach to their solution. Yet his characteristic independence and an aloofness of personality did not make for popularity with the rank and file of the party, and he was not accorded the support for higher honors that went to Hayes and Garfield. President Grant called him into his cabinet as Secretary of the Interior, but he was too much of a reformer to suit the crowd that dominated the administration and

<sup>2</sup> Brief but reliable accounts of leading Ohioans are in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. More detailed biographies of Hayes and Garfield are referred to in later footnotes. The best characterization of John Sherman is Jeanette P. Nichols, "John Sherman: A Study in Inflation," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXI (1934), 181-94.



he soon resigned. Supporting the reform movements of the early seventies, he became virtually an independent in politics, though serving one term in Congress from the Toledo district as a Republican.

Garfield, head of a small college before the war, was elected to Congress from the Western Reserve in 1862 and left the army in December, 1863, ranking as a major general of volunteers. He served with distinction in the House, early becoming one of the leading members. Unlike his old friend, General Cox, he retained his pre-war radicalism and kept in the van of his party in favoring radical reconstruction and Negro suffrage. Garfield was a hard money advocate and a theoretical believer in free trade, but compromised his views to fit the party's platforms. "We should aim at Free Trade," he wrote in 1869, "and gradually approach it through a moderate and reasonable protection."<sup>3</sup> He was a fluent speaker and was blessed with a warm-hearted, genial manner that made for friendship. His weakness, perhaps, was a tendency to be swayed too easily by the views of those whom he liked and trusted. A man of keen intellect, a careful student of governmental problems, a lover of Greek and Latin classics—he even read them while at the front—he was a fit representative of the old New England elements of the Western Reserve. He inherited the mantle of Wade divested of the latter's violence and bigotry.

Rutherford B. Hayes had neither Garfield's engaging personality nor Cox's cultural attainments. Intellectually he was inferior to both men. Yet he possessed an admirable balance of their strong qualities without their weaknesses. A party man, he was regular without being subservient and independent without breaking with the organization. A certain solidity of character and a sincerity of purpose gained him the confidence of both partisans and reformers and made him a figure to be admired and trusted. He never lost his head or indulged in personalities, and remained on friendly terms with Pendleton, Thurman, and other leading Democrats. There was nothing brilliant, magnetic or glamorous about Hayes, but in

<sup>3</sup> Theodore C. Smith, *The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield* (New Haven, 1925), I, 455.

an era of corruption and misgovernment his sturdy honesty and integrity proved a tower of strength to his party. Entering the war as a major, he showed qualities of leadership and a personal bravery



17. GEORGE H. PENDLETON

—he was wounded four times—that led eventually to a brigadier-general's commission and to a brevet major-generalship at the war's close. Elected to Congress in 1864 and again in 1866, he won no great acclaim, but his solid merits and his military record brought him the gubernatorial nomination in 1867. Thereafter, until he reached the White House in 1877, he was his party's best vote-getter in Ohio.

In the Democratic party, a brilliant triumvirate, in sheer ability probably surpassing their Republican rivals, dominated the political scene.<sup>4</sup> Vallandigham, Pendleton and Thurman rank among the great names in the history of the Democratic party. The first, de-



18. ALLEN G. THURMAN

spite his defeat in 1863, retained a strong hold on the affections of the Democratic masses and was a powerful factor in determining party policies, though not himself possessed of the availability that wins elections. His Civil War record rose to haunt him at every turn. Pendleton, "Gentleman George," was a more popular figure in the party and came near to a presidential nomination in 1868.

Allen G. Thurman's position was much like

that of Hayes in the Republican ranks. He had aroused fewer enmities than Pendleton and Vallandigham, and was more judicious and better balanced. He had reached his political prime rather slowly, for not until the crisis of the war did he emerge as a leader, though he was middle-aged by that time. Respected even by his enemies, Thurman was the strong man of his party—"the old Roman," as he came to be called. Yet the crafty arts of the practical politician were hardly a part of his make-up. Genial among friends but restrained in manner and utterance in public, he inspired little

<sup>4</sup> No recent satisfactory biographies of the three leaders are in print. The author is indebted to Professor John Hare of the history department, Ohio State University, for permission to use in manuscript his life of Allen G. Thurman, a Ph. D. dissertation at Ohio State University, 1933.

enthusiasm but much sincere admiration. All three leaders were besmirched with the tar of Copperheadism, but here again Thurman's moderation stood him in good stead, as his record had not been marred by violent anti-war diatribes. He was always a constitutionalist and from this exalted ground could defy radicalism of every type. His courage and his fundamental honesty made him more available for high office than any other Democrat of his day. It seems odd that the Peace Democratic leadership should have continued its sway after the war, particularly since Democrats with military records were common enough. Yet not one measured up to the calibre of the civilian war-time leaders.

In 1865 the Union party held its convention first, the meeting taking place June 21 at Columbus.<sup>5</sup> The soldiers were represented by 143 delegates, as demobilization was only partially completed. Some of the veterans brought with them a colored band from Chattanooga to enliven the proceedings. General William B. Woods of Licking County, former Democratic speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives and later a justice of the United States Supreme Court, presided. The power of the army was shown by the nomination of military men to three of the nine places on the State ticket. In the other cases the support of the army delegates usually determined the result. General Jacob D. Cox of Trumbull County was named by acclamation for governor, as Brough had declined to be a candidate and Samuel Galloway of Columbus had withdrawn.

The platform was conservative in tone. It praised President Andrew Johnson and indorsed his policy toward the seceded states, demanded that reconstruction should assure the peace and security of the loyal people of the South and the peace and prosperity of the Union, and declared for the abolition of slavery. Negro suffrage, rapidly becoming a thorny problem, was not mentioned. County conventions in the Western Reserve had favored it but elsewhere it had little support. An attempt from the floor to amend the platform by committing the party to congressional control of recon-

<sup>5</sup> Joseph P. Smith, *History of the Republican Party in Ohio* (Chicago, 1898), I, 200-8.



struction was declared out of order. Newspapers in the Western Reserve condemned the party's timidity on the suffrage question,<sup>6</sup> but the convention correctly represented the sentiments of the majority. The soldier delegates, fresh from contact with the former slaves, were a conservative force.

Hopes that General Cox, a pre-war radical, would take advanced ground were dashed by a letter he wrote from Oberlin on July 24, in answer to a request of a committee that he give his views on the suffrage question. His position startled his strongest supporters, for he favored separation of the two races by setting aside for the Negroes "contiguous territory in South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Florida," without, however, affecting the organization of any state. Such a territory, already largely inhabited by former slaves, would become a federal dependency with large powers of self-government and would, he hoped, attract most of the colored people from other sections. Having observed the southern situation in his military campaigns, General Cox saw only racial bitterness and strife if whites and blacks were left to exercise political power jointly.<sup>7</sup>

The statement was courageous and probably represented the views of most of the returned soldiers, who had first-hand knowledge of southern conditions, but it aroused the wrath of the radicals.<sup>8</sup> Judge William M. Dickson of Cincinnati, who had presented the platform to the State convention, answered Cox by declaring that a majority expected to see Negro suffrage adopted in the future but had refrained from any expression of opinion in the interests of harmony. He believed that Cox's letter expressed merely his personal views, and Dickson attempted to refute his reasoning. Reserve newspapers took a similar line, but conservative papers strongly supported the candidate's stand.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> George H. Porter, *Ohio Politics during the Civil War Period*, *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law* (New York), XL (1911), 208-9.

<sup>7</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 210-1; *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 1, 1865.

<sup>8</sup> See Rachel Sherman Thorndike, ed., *The Sherman Letters* (New York, 1894), 252, for General Sherman's indorsement of Cox's position.

<sup>9</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 211-3; *Cleveland Leader*, Aug. 23, 1865; *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 1865, quoting many newspapers.

Meanwhile the Democrats were having their troubles. An extreme state-rights group, active at Cincinnati and a few other places, decided to operate independently, and a convention at Columbus on August 17 nominated a full State ticket with Alexander Long as the gubernatorial candidate.<sup>10</sup>

The State convention of the regular organization, held on August 24, rejected the principles of nullification and secession but emphasized the state-rights tradition as embodied in the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of "Madison and Jefferson." Since the seceded states had never left the Union, they were still possessed of their rights as states. The platform assailed Negro suffrage and approved President Johnson's policy in restoring to the states the exercise of their rights and powers under the Constitution. General George W. Morgan of Licking County, who had served in both Mexican and Civil Wars and had been minister to Portugal under Buchanan, was named for governor. He had been an active supporter of McClellan in 1864 and his nomination was a bid for war votes. Vallandigham served as temporary chairman and Rufus P. Ranney as permanent chairman.<sup>11</sup>

The election seemed likely to turn on the Negro suffrage question. The lack of unity in the Union party ranks was evident at the formal opening of the campaign at Warren, Cox's home town. Garfield and Cox clashed over the latter's separation plan, the former opposing it and declaring flatly for Negro suffrage. David Tod, who also spoke, took a conservative stand and disagreed with Garfield. A few days later at Oberlin Cox was forced to commit himself as personally in favor of Negro suffrage in Ohio, if the matter was left to each state to decide for itself. However, he preferred that it be treated as a national question.<sup>12</sup>

The Democrats seized upon the suffrage issue as a way of absolution for their Copperhead sins.<sup>13</sup> Charging upon their opponents a belief in "perfect political and social equality" for the two races,

<sup>10</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 214; *Ohio State Journal* Aug. 18, 1865.

<sup>11</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 214-6; *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 25, 1865.

<sup>12</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 216-7.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 217-9.

they posed as the white man's party and the defenders of white supremacy. Ohioans were warned of an approaching influx of Negroes if equal rights were accorded the African. Cox's plan was attacked because of the expense involved. But Vallandigham entered the campaign to plead for a conservative reconstruction policy for the South and was soon a target for Union assaults. This helped the Unionists to shift the issue to the safer one of Copperheadism.

Though the Reserve was sulky toward Cox and showed it by a light vote, he was easily elected.<sup>14</sup> His majority of some thirty thousand votes was far under Brough's margin of 1863, but this was a peace-time election and his party was inharmonious on a major issue. Alexander Long, state-rights Democrat, had only 360 votes. The legislature was Unionist by a majority of two to one. As a result John Sherman was re-elected to the United States Senate, the caucus selecting him on the second ballot over General Robert C. Schenck and John A. Bingham, both members of the national House. Radicals had thought Sherman too conservative, the *Cleveland Leader* bitterly opposing him. The Democrats voted for Allen G. Thurman.<sup>15</sup>

The suffrage question continued to be troublesome through the next two years. In the legislature a proposal to amend the constitution to eliminate the word "white" was considered but not submitted to the voters. It was felt that the resolution was premature, as it could not be voted upon until the election of 1867. The legislature also failed to take action on proposals to indorse President Johnson's policy toward the South. The Union party caucus approved the votes of the Union members of Congress in favor of the Freedmen's Bureau Bill, which the President vetoed, while the Democratic caucus upheld the President. However, the assembly could not be brought either to indorse or to condemn the President. The Union majority was divided in sentiment and non-action was the only solution. Governor Cox tried to bridge the gap between radicals and conservatives by a personal conference with President

<sup>14</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 209.

<sup>15</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 220; *Cleveland Leader*, Jan. 4-18, 1866.

Johnson. He sent a report of his interview to the chairman of the Union party State central committee with his own indorsement of the President's sincerity in adhering to the principles upon which he had been elected.<sup>16</sup>

Union county conventions, perplexed at the growing rift between the party majority in Congress and the President, generally tried to ignore the problem, and the State convention of June 20 did an exceptionally good job of tight-rope walking.<sup>17</sup> Harmony was stressed by all of the speakers. The platform demanded the establishment of peace on such foundations that rebellion and secession would never again endanger the Nation, indorsed the proposed Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and, as usual, praised the soldiers and sailors and promised to care for the widows and orphans of the fallen. Candidates for secretary of state, supreme judge and Board of Public Works were nominated. The postponement of the suffrage issue until 1867 had solved the most difficult problem, while the indorsement of the Fourteenth Amendment satisfied the radicals and was at least acquiesced in by the conservatives. But the Democrats, much encouraged by the divisions between Johnson men and radicals, had already held their convention on May 24, and taken their stand.<sup>18</sup> The powerful triumvirate, Vallandigham, Pendleton and Thurman, dominated the proceedings. The platform, product of the first named, pledged the support of the party to the President in carrying out his policy for the restoration of all the states to the exercise of their rights under the Constitution. To this declaration Vallandigham added his own denunciation of Congress and told the convention that the President would be justified in using armed force if an attempt was made to depose him.

The summer of 1866 saw the supporters of both President Johnson and the radical majority in Congress hold national conventions to strengthen their cause. The Johnson convention was held at Philadelphia in August with delegates present from both North

<sup>16</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 219-23.

<sup>17</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 224-8.

<sup>18</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 223-5.



and South and including men of Republican, Whig and Democratic antecedents who favored a moderate policy toward the South.<sup>19</sup> From Ohio came two sets of delegates, Unionists and Democrats. A State convention of the former group had met on August 7 to choose its representatives.<sup>20</sup> The leaders included Lewis D. Campbell, successively Whig, Know-Nothing, Republican, Bell supporter in 1860, and then Union man, Joseph H. Geiger, Whig, Douglas Democrat and Unionist of the Chase faction, and several federal officeholders. Among the delegates-at-large were Thomas Ewing, Sr., the veteran Whig and Unionist, General James B. Steedman, a prominent pre-war Douglas Democrat of northwestern Ohio with an excellent military record, William S. Groesbeck, former Cincinnati Democratic Congressman and Unionist, and Campbell, who had just been appointed minister to Mexico. District delegates were also chosen. The movement was in conservative hands with old Whigs and former Democrats predominating.

The Democratic central committee resolved against participation in the Johnson national convention on July 12 but reversed itself next day and authorized the executive committee to choose delegates-at-large and to call upon the different congressional districts to appoint district delegates by conventions or through county committees.<sup>21</sup> The address issued by the executive committee disclaimed any intention of abandoning the Democratic party. The delegates-at-large were William Allen, Pendleton, General Morgan and M. R. Willett. Vallandigham was chosen by his district but wrote a letter to the State committee criticising the leaders of the Johnson movement and protesting against attempts to set up tests for admission to the Philadelphia convention. His letter only made the Unionists more emphatic in their determination that he should be excluded from the convention. "We are hurt more by the prominence given Vallandigham than by all other causes," wrote

<sup>19</sup> James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850* (New York, 1893-1922), V, 614-5.

<sup>20</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 227, 230-1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 228-30.

Geiger to President Johnson. "The fellow's doctrines now are not so bad but his name is damnation."<sup>22</sup>

At Philadelphia he was persuaded to withdraw after the Democratic delegation from Ohio had presented a resolution to the convention upholding him but accepting his withdrawal in the interests of harmony. The convention acclaimed the statesmanship of President Johnson, demanded the restoration of southern representation in Congress as a matter of constitutional right, and appealed to the country for support.<sup>23</sup>

Another convention was held at Philadelphia on September 3 to rally the opposition to the President. It was intended especially for southern loyalists but border state and northern delegates also attended.<sup>24</sup> The Union central committee for Ohio appointed eight delegates-at-large and four from each congressional district. Senator Wade, Stanley Matthews and ex-Governor Dennison, recently resigned as postmaster-general because of his disapproval of Johnson's policies, headed the Ohio group. The convention split over the issue of Negro suffrage, the southern loyalists supporting it, the border states opposing, while the Northerners did not participate.

A soldiers' and sailors' convention in support of President Johnson's policies met at Cleveland on September 17. Two natives of Ohio, General George Custer and General Thomas Ewing, Jr., the latter then residing in Kansas, were active figures in the convention.<sup>25</sup> Custer's fine military record did not save him from being assailed as a renegade by the radical press.

During the campaign a delegation of southern loyalists from the Philadelphia radical convention, supposedly making a pilgrimage to the tomb of Lincoln, was enthusiastically received in northern Ohio and found time to make anti-Johnson speeches at a number

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 230, footnote.

<sup>23</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Aug. 15, 16, 17, 1866, for convention proceedings.

<sup>24</sup> William A. Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic* (New York, 1907), 76-8.

<sup>25</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Sept. 18, 19, 20, 1866.

of places.<sup>26</sup> General Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts also campaigned in Ohio in support of the radical cause.<sup>27</sup>

President Johnson's "swing around the circle," ostensibly to lay the corner-stone of a monument to Douglas at Chicago, proved injurious to his cause. He let himself become involved in altercations with hecklers in the crowds that heard his speeches, and indulged in vigorous denunciations of his enemies.<sup>28</sup> At Cleveland radical sympathizers, with little respect for the high office of the visitor, annoyed him until he answered them in the customary style of a good stump speaker but at the expense of his dignity.<sup>29</sup> In the cold print of unfriendly newspapers his remarks seemed unbecoming a chief executive. Rumors of drunkenness and even insanity were circulated, and the President's cause was injured by his tour. At Cincinnati and Columbus, on his way back to Washington, he was accorded fairer treatment but his speeches in Ohio were not helpful to his supporters.<sup>30</sup>

Chief interest centered on the congressional candidates. The Johnson men tried to cooperate with the Democrats but in most cases were offered straight-out Democratic candidates to support.<sup>31</sup> Many conservative voters, forced to choose between former Copperheads and radical Unionists, preferred the latter. Governor Cox tried to bridge the gap between radicals and Johnson men by insisting that the differences between President and Congress were over methods, not objectives. Congress wanted a constitutional amendment (the Fourteenth) as a condition for the restoration of the southern states; the President wanted the goal achieved in a different manner. The governor's views were not agreeable to the radicals and the victory of the Union party in sixteen of the nineteen congressional districts was interpreted as a radical triumph, though not all of the victors were extremists. The only seat gained

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, 21, 1866.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 1, 1866.

<sup>28</sup> George F. Milton, *The Age of Hate* (New York, 1930), 362-4.

<sup>29</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, Sept. 4, 5, 6, 1866.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 15, 1866; *Ohio State Journal*, Sept. 13, 1866; *Cincinnati Gazette*, Sept. 13, 1866.

<sup>31</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 232-4, summarizes the campaign. See also *Cincinnati Gazette*, Aug.-Oct. 1866, for many speeches and incidents.

by the Democrats was in the Thirteenth district where General George Morgan was elected over Columbus Delano.<sup>32</sup> Union candidates for three State offices won easily.<sup>33</sup>

The Democrats were keenly disappointed at their failure.<sup>34</sup> Despite dissensions in the Union party ranks, they had been badly defeated. Some were inclined to attribute the result to their attempts at cooperation with the Johnson men, believing that an independent course would have been better. Few conservatives had been willing to vote with them. The fusion movement, such as it was, had accomplished little and was abandoned.

The problem of the suffrage remained to embarrass the Union party. The legislature, having postponed the issue in 1866, had to face it in the session of 1867.<sup>35</sup> The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States granting the Negro citizenship and civil rights was quickly ratified by a party vote, though a number of conservatives absented themselves. But the right to vote was not conferred by the Amendment. The State Constitution would have to be amended, if voting privileges were to be extended, and consistency seemed to require that the radical party in Ohio follow the lead of the majority in Congress which was preparing to force Negro suffrage on the South. However, the conservatives were strong enough, voting with the Democrats, to block action in the House. Ultimately a compromise was arranged. The House conservatives accepted a Negro suffrage proposal with a proviso attached that would disfranchise those who had borne arms against the government or had fled to escape the draft or had deserted the military service and had not been honorably discharged. It was supposed that the disfranchisement of Copperhead deserters and draft evaders would prove popular enough in conservative sections of the State to overcome the dislike of Negro voting.

The disfranchisement proposal, however, produced embarrassing results. It was found that Ohio had a total of 27,178 persons listed

<sup>32</sup> Morgan's election was contested and Delano later was given the seat.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 228-9.

<sup>34</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 234.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-8.



as deserters but that a fourth of these had deserted after Appomattox because of fears that they would be used on the frontier or sent to the Mexican border to finish their enlistment periods. Only in a technical sense were they without honorable discharges. To solve the problem the lower house of the assembly appealed to Ohio's Senators and Representatives in Congress to secure the passage of a law clearing up the status of this group. Representative James M. Ashley of Toledo fathered such a measure, which Congress passed in July removing those who deserted after April 19, 1865, from the classification of deserters so far as any civil disabilities were concerned.<sup>36</sup> This seemed to relieve the Union party's embarrassment, but the resentment aroused against the proposed amendment was hardly lessened.

The Union Republican party, as it now chose to call itself, held its State convention at Columbus on June 19.<sup>37</sup> The radicals were in control and General Robert C. Schenck, as temporary chairman, indulged in a violent attack on President Johnson. The platform indorsed the reconstruction policy of Congress, approved impartial manhood suffrage as embodied in the proposed amendment to the State Constitution, expressed the convention's approval of the strict military administration of General Philip H. Sheridan in Louisiana and Texas, and praised the administration of Governor Cox. Yet the governor did not permit his name to go before the convention, knowing that his moderate views were unacceptable to the radicals now in the saddle. The convention turned to another military figure but a man of greater party regularity than Cox, and that was General Rutherford B. Hayes, member of Congress from Cincinnati. Former Congressman Samuel Galloway of Columbus had strong support but as usual in post-war conventions the civilian candidate went down before the military. The vote on the second ballot was 286 for Hayes and 208 for Galloway. The latter was named for lieutenant-governor but refused the nomination, and John C. Lee of Lucas County was substituted by the State central committee.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>37</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 233-8.

After the nomination of Hayes a discordant note was injected into the Union Republican campaign by the Ohio Wool Growers' Association. The candidate's tariff record was unsatisfactory, and the association called a meeting to consider indorsements of protectionists in the campaign. The convention was poorly attended, however, and no action was taken with regard to the State ticket.<sup>38</sup> The Painesville *Telegraph*, a radical Republican organ in the sheep-raising Western Reserve, complained for a while about Hayes's wool record, but the issue aroused no interest and played no part in the campaign.

Meanwhile the Democrats, reverting to their pre-war practice, had held their convention on January 8, the anniversary of Jackson's victory at New Orleans. Thurman, Vallandigham and Pendleton guided the proceedings and apportioned the offices. To the first went the gubernatorial nomination, to the second the party's support for the United States senatorship, and to the last named his State's indorsement for the presidential nomination in 1868. The Peace Democracy of war days seemed to be dominant. The platform denounced the reconstruction measures of Congress and opposed Negro suffrage. "Niggerism" was to be made the leading issue. This was before the legislature had passed the constitutional amendment proposal. After it had acted, the Democratic State central committee denounced the measure and asked for the support of all voters opposed to race equality and to the unfair disfranchisement of former soldiers.<sup>39</sup>

A little group of state-sovereignty Democrats appealed to the Kentucky legislature to devise a plan for that state to nullify the reconstruction legislation of Congress.<sup>40</sup> These extremists had been trying to function as an independent group since 1864, offering State tickets in 1865 and 1866 but polling an insignificant vote. In April, 1867, they held a national convention at Cincinnati with six states represented but the movement was lost in the political storm that raged around the suffrage issue.

<sup>38</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, June 22, 25, 28, July 9, 1867.

<sup>39</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 238-40.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

Thurman conducted an aggressive campaign, holding the Republican radicals responsible for not averting the war and for prolonging it, and assailing them for attempting to subordinate the white race to the black and for repeatedly violating the Constitution of the United States. He referred to the proposed State suffrage amendment as an attempt "to confer the vote on seven or eight thousand blacks and mulattoes and to take it away from about three times as many white soldiers." He proposed that the Federal Government reduce the expenses of army and Freedmen's Bureau, equalize taxation and tax the bondholder, if it could be done constitutionally, stop the granting of public lands to railroad corporations, and restore the South to a state of prosperity so that it could pay its share of the taxes. He also gave a qualified indorsement to Pendleton's idea of paying the bonds in greenbacks.<sup>41</sup>

Hayes courageously defended the principle of impartial suffrage and the reconstruction measures of Congress, but he found his best ammunition in reviewing the war record of the Democrats and reviving the issue of Copperheadism.<sup>42</sup> In fact, the campaign soon degenerated into emotional appeals against race equality on the one hand and Copperhead control of the State government on the other. Democratic processions featured wagons occupied by girls dressed in white who bore banners with such inscriptions as this: "Fathers, save us from Negro equality." Unionists used such slogans as "Honest Black men are preferable to white traitors," and "Democrats murdered our President."<sup>43</sup>

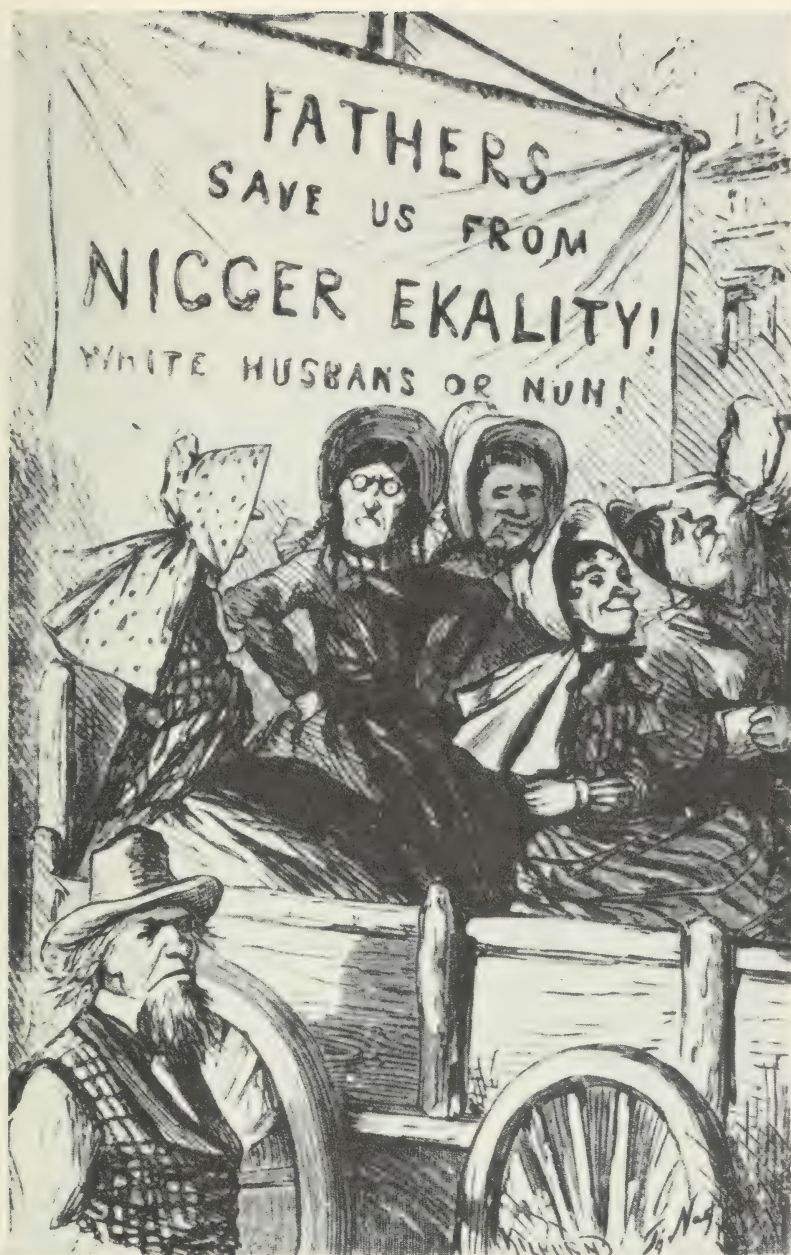
Both sides imported speakers from other states and the contest attracted national interest. It was regarded as a referendum on Negro suffrage and congressional reconstruction. Yet the stirring up of race prejudice and war-time animosities so clouded the issues that no clear verdict was rendered at the polls. Wade's vituperation

<sup>41</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 245; John S. Hare, Allen G. Thurman, 150-61.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Richard Williams, *Life of Rutherford Birchard Hayes* (Boston, 1914), I, 293-327, for speeches of Hayes. He also kept a scrapbook for each campaign in which he took an active part. These may be consulted at the Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont.

<sup>43</sup> Clifford H. Moore, "Ohio in National Politics, 1865-1890," *O. S. A. H. Quar.*, XXXVII (1928), 243.





19. "PARADE OF THE VIRGINS."

Cartoon by Thomas Nast on the Ohio Election of 1867.



hurt his party in the Ohio River section,<sup>44</sup> while Vallandigham continued to be the chief liability of the Democracy. However, the two candidates for governor refrained from personalities and even exchanged courtesies near the close of the heated campaign. "I sent my card to Judge Thurman when he was here," wrote Hayes in a private letter. "He was not in his room. He afterwards sent me a note which I prize. He says: 'Whatever the result it is a great satisfaction to know that you and I have behaved like gentlemen and friends.' " <sup>45</sup>

The first reports indicated a Democratic victory and Hayes accepted his supposed defeat with good grace.<sup>46</sup> But complete returns indicated that the Union State ticket had won by majorities ranging from 2,500 to 2,900 with Hayes leading the ticket. However, a Democratic legislature was elected and Wade was thereby retired to private life. The suffrage amendment was defeated by a vote of 216,987 to 255,340.<sup>47</sup> The Democrats had made good use of it to cover up their war record. But for the onus of Copperheadism they might have won a sweeping victory for their State ticket.

The outcome of the election was a bitter disappointment to the radical Unionists. Wade, repudiated by his home State, could not understand why so many of his own party could favor Negro suffrage for the South but not for Ohio.<sup>48</sup> The Cleveland *Leader*, staunchly radical, admitted that the suffrage issue was chiefly responsible for the partial defeat but rejoiced that not one Republican paper had recanted and insisted that the fight would go on.<sup>49</sup>

The new governor found himself in an excellent position politically. He could make recommendations to the assembly, knowing that little attention would be given to them, and he could not be held responsible for its measures as he had no veto power to check the Democratic majority. His picture of his situation is in striking

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 234 and footnotes; Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 246-7.

<sup>45</sup> Charles R. Williams, ed., *Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes* (Columbus, 1924), III, 48.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 238-9, for complete election returns.

<sup>48</sup> Moore, "Ohio in National Politics, 1865-1896," 234, n. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Oct. 12, 1867.



# ELECTION *for* GOVERNOR

## 1867

Unionist Counties Shaded  
Democratic Counties Unshaded

contrast with accounts of his war-time predecessors: "I am enjoying the new office. It strikes me at a guess as the pleasantest I have ever had. Not too much hard work, plenty of time to read, good society, etc., etc."<sup>50</sup>

The Democratic assembly speedily showed its partisanship by passing a resolution rescinding the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment by the previous legislature. This attempt to withdraw Ohio's approval before the amendment had been ratified by the required three-fourths of the States was unsuccessful as Secretary of State Seward did not return the original resolution of ratification and Congress declared the amendment in effect, including Ohio among the required three-fourths of the states.<sup>51</sup>

The assembly also embarked on an ill-advised attempt to revive the old visible admixture law, declared unconstitutional in 1860. The closeness of the result in 1867 had led to Democratic charges that the victors had carried their State ticket by the votes of mulattoes and Negroes.<sup>52</sup> Consequently the legislature attempted to debar those persons of mixed blood who had been voting legally under the court decision of 1860. The new "visible admixture law" placed the burden of proof on any person whose right to vote was challenged on the ground that he possessed African blood. Any trace of Negro ancestry was to disqualify such persons from voting. This attempt of the assembly to interpret the word "white" in the State Constitution met the same fate as its predecessor of 1858, for the State supreme court held that the law was invalid.<sup>53</sup>

In electing a United States Senator the two houses chose to disregard the reported division of the spoils by Pendleton, Thurman and Vallandigham whereby the last named was to receive the senatorial toga. Thurman's aggressive campaign in 1867 and the strength he had shown at the polls made party leaders feel that he had earned the prize, while Vallandigham was regarded as a millstone around the neck of the Democracy. There were fears also

<sup>50</sup> Letter to Sardis Birchard, Jan. 17, 1868, *Diary and Letters of Hayes*, III, 51.

<sup>51</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 248-50.

<sup>52</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, Oct. 17, 18, 25, 1867, citing Democratic papers.

<sup>53</sup> Porter, *Ohio Politics*, 251-3.

that he would not be admitted to the Senate if elected. He fought desperately but the caucus voted for Thurman, fifty-one to twenty-four.<sup>54</sup> The veteran Copperhead leader was bitterly disappointed at the result but he was still a power to be reckoned with because of his popularity with the masses of Democrats.

A jubilant Democracy held its State convention on January 8 at Columbus and nominated candidates for secretary of state, supreme judge and some minor State offices. The platform repeated the party's stand of 1867 on reconstruction and Negro suffrage and approved a plan proposed earlier by Pendleton to pay the five-twenty United States bonds in greenbacks.<sup>55</sup>

Pendleton was the party's favorite for the Democratic presidential nomination and was using what came to be known as the Ohio Idea as his chief argument.<sup>56</sup> The West in the post-war years was suffering from a currency scarcity as it was a debtor section and its money flowed eastward to pay its balances. With State banknotes no longer issued, it depended on national greenbacks, issued during the war, and national banknotes. The depreciated greenbacks were popular but the national banks were disliked, and the war bonds, exempt from taxation, were regarded as a heavy burden. High tariffs were also criticised as beneficial to eastern industrialists but burdensome to western farmers. Secretary of the Treasury McCulloch's policy of currency contraction to bring about specie payment for greenbacks was highly unpopular with Westerners who feared that low prices and increased debt burdens would result. Instead of funding the greenbacks and short-term debt into long-term bonds, they preferred to pay off the bonds with further issues of greenbacks, thus decreasing the debt and interest burdens and expanding the currency.

Many Peace Democrats saw in the discontent with economic conditions a handy weapon to be used to recover political power. Oppo-

<sup>54</sup> Hare, Thurman, 161-2; J. L. Vallandigham, *Clement L. Vallandigham* (Baltimore, 1872), 422-3.

<sup>55</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Jan. 9, 10, 1868.

<sup>56</sup> Chester McA. Destler, "The Origin and Character of the Pendleton Plan," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXIV (1937), 171-84; Moore, "Ohio in National Politics, 1865-1896," 244-52.



sition to eastern financial policies fitted in with their war-time sectional hostility toward the East and, coupled with their dislike of national banks, seemed reminiscent of the party's Jacksonian agrarian, anti-bank traditions, though it ran counter to the earlier hard money views of the Democracy. The Cincinnati *Enquirer*, the organ of Washington McLean, made itself the spokesman of western inflationists in 1867, apparently hoping to swing control of the Democratic party away from the conservatives and then to overthrow the Unionists by shifting the battle to new issues.<sup>57</sup> This change of front from its former conservatism proved so popular with the masses of voters that Democratic leaders had to make concessions to its proposal to pay off federal bonds with further issues of greenbacks.

Pendleton, a lawyer and a man of wealth and aristocratic family, had been in his congressional career an opponent of greenbacks but now was pushed by McLean into a position where he had to yield to inflationist sentiment. During the campaign of 1867 he evolved a plan which included stabilizing the greenbacks at seventy-one cents in gold, converting gold in the sinking fund into greenbacks, abolishing the national bank currency and replacing it with greenbacks, continuing war taxes temporarily, using drastic economy to accumulate a surplus, and paying off the five-twenty bonds as they became due with all surplus greenbacks. His proposals were only mildly inflationist and did not satisfy extremists but the *Enquirer* modified its views and backed Pendleton for the presidency.<sup>58</sup>

The greenback issue had played a part in the campaign of 1867, the radical Cleveland *Leader* putting it next in importance to the suffrage question in explaining the narrowness of the Unionist victory.<sup>59</sup> The Democratic State convention of 1868 indorsed the Pendleton plan as a way of bringing about specie payment for greenbacks, but the support of the *Enquirer* created an impression that its author was really in favor of debt repudiation and damaged his candidacy in the East.

<sup>57</sup> Destler, "Origin and Character of Pendleton Plan," 174-6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 177-82.

<sup>59</sup> Oct. 12, 1867.

At the Democratic national convention, meeting in New York City in July, the Westerners secured the incorporation in the platform of Pendleton's proposal to pay the bonds in greenbacks but were unable to bring about his nomination, though he led on the early ballots. The name of another Ohioan, Chief Justice Chase, was held in reserve by a group of Easterners, to be offered when the convention seemed hopelessly deadlocked. Chase had drawn away from the radicals in the Union party and had presided over the impeachment proceedings against President Johnson with too much impartiality to suit Senate leaders. Many Democrats, especially in the East, regarded Chase as a desirable choice despite his views on Negro suffrage, and Vallandigham and Alexander Long, arch-Copperheads of other days, were prepared to cooperate with them. The former was still angry at Pendleton over his defeat for the Senate. But the Ohio delegates, seeing that Pendleton could not win, swung to former Governor Horatio Seymour of New York to head off the Chase movement. The convention stampeded to Seymour and both Ohio candidates lost out.<sup>60</sup>

In the Union party ranks General Grant was unopposed. His tremendous personal popularity was too great an asset to be overlooked by the radicals who wanted to use him to gain support for their program of military reconstruction and Negro suffrage for the South. Warned by the results in Ohio and other states in 1867, the convention did not demand political equality for the Negro in the North, leaving it to the states in that section to determine their own course. The problem of the greenbacks was met by a plank declaring for the payment of the national debt according to the letter and the spirit of the laws.<sup>61</sup> This was evasive but it did not indorse Pendleton's plan. The Ohio Union convention had flatly favored the payment of the five-twenty bonds in legal tenders and the taxation of future bond issues. Leading Ohio Republican Unionists, including Senator John Sherman, were committed to this policy,

<sup>60</sup> Charles H. Coleman, *The Election of 1868* (New York, 1933), 68-83, 102-49, 187-245; Stewart Mitchell, *Horatio Seymour of New York* (Cambridge, 1938), 395-442.

<sup>61</sup> Coleman, *Election of 1868*, 39, 89-92.

and only Garfield of the congressional delegation opposed it.<sup>62</sup> But the national platform was indefinite enough to provide a way out.

The Ohio delegation was pledged by the State convention to support Grant for President and Wade for Vice-President.<sup>63</sup> The second indorsement was not accepted by the national convention. After five ballots Wade was defeated by Schuyler Colfax of Indiana.<sup>64</sup> However, the fact that the head of the ticket was a native of Ohio was sufficient compensation for the loss of the second honor. The use of the term "National Union Republican party" by the convention restored the old name "Republican" to official usage, and it soon became the only designation for the party.

Ohioans played a significant role in the impeachment proceedings against President Johnson in the spring of 1868. Representative John A. Bingham of the Sixteenth District was one of the House managers to conduct the prosecution before the Senate, Chief Justice Chase presided at the trial, and Senator Ben Wade, who was president pro tempore of the Senate, would have become president if Johnson had been removed. U. S. Attorney-General Henry Stanbery, once State attorney-general and William S. Groesbeck of Cincinnati, former member of Congress, helped defend the President. Both Wade and Sherman voted with the majority of the Senate in favor of removal, but the result was one short of meeting the two-thirds requirement. Wade was none too popular with the radicals of his home State, the Cleveland *Leader* finding consolation in defeat since it kept Wade out of the presidency and reduced his chances for the Republican vice-presidential nomination.<sup>65</sup>

The campaign saw the Republicans put aside differences over financial matters and ride to victory behind the popularity of Grant. Seymour's war record was exhumed to provide charges of Copperhead sympathies, while his conservative financial views made it difficult for Ohio Democrats to give his candidacy the en-

<sup>62</sup> Moore, "Ohio in National Politics, 1865-1896," 252-7.

<sup>63</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 248.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 254-5.

<sup>65</sup> May 18, 1868. See also Smith, *Life and Letters of Garfield*, I, 425.

thusiastic support they would have accorded Pendleton. Seymour appeared in Ohio late in the campaign and drew large crowds but the odds against him were too great.<sup>66</sup>

The October election gave Isaac R. Sherwood, Republican, a majority of more than seventeen thousand for secretary of state, and thirteen of the nineteen congressional seats went to Republicans, a loss of three over the election of 1866.<sup>67</sup> James M. Ashley, Toledo radical, was among the defeated, while eight Republicans won by majorities under one thousand. Grant's margin at the November election was 41,546, a clear indication that he was far stronger than his party.

The last phase of the suffrage question in Ohio was the struggle over the Fifteenth Amendment, which forbade the United States or any state to deny or abridge the right to vote on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude. It was submitted by Congress to the states for ratification in 1869 and was rejected by the Democratic assembly. The Republican State convention, held on June 23 at Columbus, indorsed it in its platform and renominated Governor Hayes by acclamation.<sup>68</sup> The platform also charged the legislature with extravagance, failure to enact needed financial measures, extraordinary length of session and other lapses. It favored the speedy establishment of a soldiers' orphans home by the State. The greenback question and the tariff were not mentioned. The popularity of Hayes and President Grant's approval of the Fifteenth Amendment were expected to carry the party to victory.

The Democrats, in a rather lengthy platform, dealt, with a variety of State and national issues in an effort to corral votes from every quarter. They demanded taxation of government bonds, their payment in greenbacks, the abolishment of the national banking system, a tariff for revenue only, "a limited number of hours of labor in all Government workshops," dictated by the well being of the laborers, and liberal grants of public land to the actual settlers but not to "swindling railroad corporations." The general

<sup>66</sup> Coleman, *Election of 1868*, 338-40, 360-1; Williams, *Hayes*, I, 331-2.

<sup>67</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 258-60.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 262-66; *Ohio State Journal*, June 24, 1869.



program of the recent Labor and Industrial Congress was indorsed. The suffrage was declared to be a right for each state to decide for itself and the Fifteenth Amendment was condemned; the policies of the "Radical party" were criticised; the Democratic State legislature was defended; and conservatives were welcomed to the Democratic party as "brethren in a common cause."<sup>69</sup> The platform was a skilful attempt to combine the old stand of the party on suffrage and reconstruction questions with a program dealing with the new problems that were attracting attention.

The convention had less success with its nomination for governor. With Pendleton, the real choice of the delegates, positive in his refusal to let his name be used, they turned to a military figure, General William S. Rosecrans, who had gone to California and lately had been serving as minister to Mexico by appointment of President Johnson. An embarrassing delay ensued before the nominee could be located, but he finally telegraphed his refusal on August 7, and followed this with a letter indicating a lack of sympathy with the party's stand on leading issues.<sup>70</sup> The State central committee convened at Columbus on August 11 and forced the reluctant Pendleton to take the nomination. If Rosecrans had accepted he could hardly have run on the platform of the party, and his religion—he was a Roman Catholic—might have brought the question of a division of the State school fund into the campaign.<sup>71</sup> Pendleton was a safer choice.

The campaign was dull and the voters apathetic. The suffrage issue was too stale to arouse much interest and the greenback question had lost a great deal of its significance after the Democratic defeat of 1868. Congress, by the act of March 18, 1869, had declared for the payment of bonds in coin, and prosperity quieted criticism. The Republicans, more active and better organized, had to contend with local disaffections, especially at Cincinnati, where a reform element was cooperating with the Democrats. On the whole, how-

<sup>69</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, July 8, 1869.

<sup>70</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 266-8.

<sup>71</sup> *Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 11, 1869.

ever, the Republicans were fairly confident of the outcome.<sup>72</sup> The result was a shock. Hayes had a plurality of but 7,500 votes,<sup>73</sup> while the Hamilton County "Reformers" held the balance of power in both houses of the assembly. The Democrats had shown surprising strength.

The suffrage issue was at last settled but by the narrowest possible margin. When the vote was taken in the new General Assembly on the Fifteenth Amendment, it was ratified by a majority of one vote in the senate and two in the house.<sup>74</sup> The Republican Reformers, with one exception, voted for it. Thus ended the question of Negro suffrage after five years of debate. It had helped the Democratic party to recover much of the strength it had lost during the war but its usefulness was now at an end. The Negro quietly began to cast his ballot and the issue was closed.

The early 1870's witnessed the stirring of a new liberalism.<sup>75</sup> The Republican party had accomplished its objectives and had thereby lost its old crusading fervor. Its campaigns had become traditional and stereotyped, based upon past glories rather than upon a far-sighted program for the future. Economic conservatism was displacing humanitarian radicalism, and in the process of readjustment old leaders were being put aside or were compelled to speak a new language. The greenback issue was rendered less dangerous to party solidarity by the prosperity of the early seventies, and the payment of the five-twenty bonds in gold was acquiesced in, if not approved in the West.

The tariff question, however, was becoming a threat to party unity, for the protectionism of the East was still unpopular in the Middle West. Garfield, Hayes, Cox and other Republican leaders were hostile to high tariff and had the support of such influential editors as James M. Comly of the *Ohio State Journal* and Murat

<sup>72</sup> *Diary and Letters of Hayes*, III, 64-7.

<sup>73</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 268.

<sup>74</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Jan. 21, 22, 24, 1870; *Diary and Letters of Hayes*, III, 81-2.

<sup>75</sup> For collecting newspaper materials of political significance for the years, 1869-1872, the author is indebted to the following graduate students in his seminars at Ohio State University: J. A. Ellis, John W. Keller, Helen Lunsford and Mrs. Agnes Henderson.

Halstead of the *Cincinnati Commercial*. The latter as early as 1866 was writing against the "infernal tariff" and "those damned harpies of Pennsylvania and New England."<sup>76</sup> Hayes was invited by Charles Nordhoff and David A. Wells to attend a conference of liberals at Washington, April 19 and 20, 1870, to consider "matters of finance." The governor, while sympathetic, was against any projects that might lead to a new party and did not attend.<sup>77</sup> Ohio was not sufficiently industrialized to regard the continuance of the war-time tariff rates as necessary to her prosperity, and the campaign of 1870 saw the Democrats make a strong bid for anti-tariff support. Other causes were also attracting adherents.



20. MURAT HALSTEAD

Three indications of new trends in politics made themselves evident in 1869 and 1870. The first was the meeting at Cincinnati of a National Labor Congress, first started in 1866.<sup>78</sup> Its proposal for a labor party was carried out in

Ohio in 1871 at a State convention at Columbus on July 26.<sup>79</sup> It did not, however, nominate a ticket, contenting itself with a statement of principles. At Cincinnati in 1870 Labor Reformers made indorsements of congressional candidates.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Halstead to Hayes, July 6, 1866, Hayes MSS. (Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont).

<sup>77</sup> David A. Wells to Hayes, Apr. 2, 1870, Hayes MSS.; Hayes to Charles Nordhoff, Apr. 6, 1870, and to David A. Wells, Apr. 6, 1870, *Diary and Letters of Hayes*, III, 94, 95-6. See also Smith, *Life and Letters of Garfield*, I, 455-6.

<sup>78</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Aug. 19, 22, 1870.

<sup>79</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, July 27, 1871.

<sup>80</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, Sept. 7, 14, 17, Oct. 1, 1870.

The second was the political activity of the temperance reformers.<sup>81</sup> Although a State temperance alliance refused to favor independent political action, a Cleveland group on March 24 nominated an anti-liquor municipal ticket, which received 1,049 votes in the spring election of 1869. Through the activity of Dr. M. G. Tyrrell of Cleveland, a little group of earnest reformers assembled at Crestline, April 14-15, 1869, and called a State convention of temperance men to nominate a ticket. The convention assembled at Mansfield, July 14, and named Rev. Samuel Scott, a Methodist minister, as its candidate for governor. Though he polled only 679 votes, it marked the entry of what came to be called the Prohibition party into Ohio politics, three years before it offered a national ticket. Thereafter it presented candidates for State offices year after year, never making a formidable showing but occasionally in close elections holding the balance of power. It drew its support chiefly from Republicans, but not until 1874 did the latter recognize the existence of the liquor issue. A cautiously phrased temperance plank in the party platform of that year was designed to appease anti-liquor Republicans and keep them loyal to the old party.

Creating scarcely a ripple in the seventies in the field of politics but significant for later generations was the revival of the woman's rights movement in Ohio. The passage of the Fifteenth Amendment encouraged some of the feminist leaders to hope that the suffrage would be further broadened to eliminate discrimination on account of sex. In the fall of 1869 a national convention of woman suffrage advocates met at Cleveland, a State association was organized and a new period of feminist activity had begun. This has been recorded in an earlier chapter.<sup>82</sup>

The platforms of the two major parties in 1870 gave cold comfort to labor reformers, temperance crusaders and woman's rights advocates, but they did give evidence of a recognition of the need for a broader base for party allegiances. The Republicans devoted

<sup>81</sup> George L. Case, "The Prohibition Party: Its Origin, Purpose and Growth," *Magazine of Western History* (New York), IX (1888-89), 122-4, 243; Frederick W. Adrian, *Political Significance of the Prohibition Party* (Ph. D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1942).

<sup>82</sup> See Chapter VIII.



but one short resolution to a laudation of the party's past; the other five dealt with contemporary problems. They indorsed the Grant Administration for reducing the national debt and lowering taxes; they favored a tariff for revenue "so adjusted as to be the least prejudicial to the industrial and producing interests of every class or section, while securing to the home producer a fair protection against the foreign producer;" they called for the admission to American registry of vessels purchased abroad; they condemned grants of public lands to monopolies and corporations; and they expressed sympathy with the Germans in their heroic efforts to establish, maintain and defend their national unity—a reference to the Franco-Prussian war which had just begun.<sup>83</sup>

The Democrats denounced protective tariff and the internal revenue taxation system, attacked land monopoly, criticised as unjust, oppressive and unconstitutional a recent act of Congress to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment, and repeated their earlier declarations for the taxation of government bonds and the abolishment of the national banking system.<sup>84</sup>

The campaign, involving as it did only minor State offices and membership in the lower house of Congress, was unexciting and a light vote was cast. Discontent with the protective system brought the tariff issue into the campaign, which proved rather embarrassing to Republican congressional candidates. In the face of Democratic assaults the candidates interpreted the evasive platform statement according to the sentiments of their districts. In the Third District Lewis D. Campbell made it the leading issue, and defeated the Republican stalwart, General Robert C. Schenck, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, which originates tariff legislation. These two former Whigs had moved in opposite directions. Campbell, an early Republican, had become a conservative Unionist, following President Johnson over to the Democratic party. Schenck, once so conservative that he was only tardily recognized as a Republican, turned radical in the fires of war and became one of Johnson's bitterest critics and an advocate of a

<sup>83</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 276.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 272-3; Cincinnati *Commercial*, June 2, 4, 1870.

harsh policy toward the South. Vallandigham in 1870 assisted one of his old rivals to defeat the other.<sup>85</sup> For thirty years, beginning with the year 1842, when Schenck was first elected as a Whig, these three men had monopolized the Third District's seat in the House except for the years 1851-53. Schenck had served continuously since his defeat of Vallandigham in 1862. President Grant provided for him in 1871 by making him minister to England where his connection with a mining speculation brought his career to an end under a cloud.

The Republican plurality for Isaac R. Sherwood for secretary of state was 16,695.<sup>86</sup> Prohibition candidates for State offices polled around 2,800 votes. Fourteen of the nineteen representatives to Congress were Republicans. The superior Republican organization and Democratic apathy seemed to have accounted for the result. Issues played but a slight part.

As the time for the conventions of 1871 approached, Vallandigham showed his hand in a surprising maneuver. Since his defeat for the Senate by Thurman, the party leadership seemed to have rested with Pendleton, Washington McLean and Thurman, and the once powerful chief of the Copperheads had been in eclipse. But he had quietly been planning to restore his prestige. He had shown a willingness to forget the past by his rapprochement with Chase in 1868 and was evolving a program which might appeal to liberals of both parties. The Montgomery County convention of May 18, held at Dayton, adopted a series of resolutions at his behest which attracted nation-wide attention. They declared the old issues settled and accepted the finality of the recent constitutional amendments though insisting on a strict construction. As a future program they offered such policies as universal amnesty, revenue tariff, taxation based on wealth, economy and payment of the public debt, a return to specie currency, banking reform, civil service reform, and no more land grants to corporations.<sup>87</sup>

The move was derided in the Republican ranks. The *Ohio State*

<sup>85</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, Sept. 5, 1870.

<sup>86</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 277-8.

<sup>87</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, May 19, 1871.

*Journal's* comment is typical: "It would be out of the course of nature for the Republican party not to feel some gratification that the great archtraitor of the peace Democracy has been brought by any means to get down on his belly and humbly eat the many dirty words which have defiled his mouth in the utterance during the past ten years. If his repentance were sincere, and his desire to atone for his miserable past by some good in the future could be accepted as reliable, the very angels in Heaven would rejoice over the salvation of this meanest of sinners."<sup>88</sup> The *Cleveland Leader* questioned the sincerity of his remarkable conversion. "Is Saul among the Prophets?" "Can the leopard change his spots, or the Ethiopian his skin?"<sup>89</sup>

Among the Democrats opinion ranged all the way from open criticism to enthusiastic approval. The Thurman-Pendleton leadership was ready to make concessions to gain Republican support, but Vallandigham had practically declared for the abandonment of much of what Thurman had been fighting for in the Senate. It looked as if the Dayton firebrand was playing a shrewd game to unhorse his rivals and perhaps bag the other senatorship, held by Sherman, if the Democrats could carry the assembly on his program.

The State convention of June 1 revealed the success of this "New Departure."<sup>90</sup> The platform contained most of what Vallandigham wanted, toned down to win the support of the hesitant. The only significant change was the incorporation of the old Pendleton proposal to pay the bondholders in the same currency they had loaned the government and to make greenbacks convertible into three per cent bonds on demand. George W. Morgan presented the resolutions committee's report and Vallandigham seconded his motion for its adoption. Frank H. Hurd of Toledo and Daniel S. Uhl of Holmes County supported a minority report declaring that the Democracy of Ohio would never recognize the validity of the war amendments, but this was voted down amid much confusion and bad feeling. The platform was accepted, 365 to 129. George W.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Moore, "Ohio in National Politics, 1865-1896," 271, footnote.

<sup>89</sup> May 20, 1871.

<sup>90</sup> *Ohio Statesman*, June 2, 1871.

McCook of Steubenville, politician member of a famous family of soldiers, was named for governor. He had served in the Mexican War and for a brief period in the Civil War, and had been attorney-general from 1854 to 1856.<sup>91</sup>

The chief advocate of the New Departure did not live to see it tried out. Two weeks after the convention met, Vallandigham accidentally shot himself. He was one of the attorneys in a sensational murder trial at Lebanon and was demonstrating to his associate counsel how the murdered man might have killed himself when the pistol he was using went off. He had not known that it was loaded. His death removed one of Ohio's most remarkable men at the moment when his prospects seemed brighter than at any time since the great defeat of 1863. In his move to abandon outworn issues and liberalize his party's program he had shown a breadth of judgment and a far-sightedness that might have made him a powerful force in politics for many years to come, for he was only fifty at the time of his death. Had he exhibited a little more of this spirit earlier in his career and a little less tenacity in clinging to the gods of the Democracy's past, he might have spared himself the hard blows that came his way. Yet the idol of the masses of "butternut" Democrats was loved for the qualities that were his undoing, his indomitable spirit, his flaming courage and his Scotch-Irish single-track perseverance.

The Republicans met the New Departure with a repetition of the chief planks of the convention of 1870 and added declarations in favor of civil service reform and the calling of a convention to amend the State's Constitution.<sup>92</sup> General Edward F. Noyes of Cincinnati was named for governor by acclamation. He had lost a leg in the Atlanta campaign, ending three years of active military service, and was a popular figure with the ex-soldiers. Massachusetts-born and a graduate of Dartmouth College, he had come to Cincinnati in 1857 and had received a law degree from the Cincinnati Law School in 1858. After his retirement from the army he had

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, June 3, 1871.

<sup>92</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 280-6.



been city solicitor of Cincinnati and probate judge. In his thirty-ninth year he was nominated for governor, chiefly because of his brilliance as an orator and his appeal to the soldier element.<sup>93</sup>

The campaign was unexciting. Without Vallandigham the New Departure lost some of its appeal. McCook became ill in July and had to leave the conduct of his campaign to others. Lack of funds also hampered the Democrats. The general satisfaction with the Hayes State administration and the willingness of reform Republicans to support General Noyes kept the normal Republican vote intact and the party carried its State ticket by safe majorities. Noyes had a plurality of 20,168. Gideon T. Stewart, Prohibitionist, received 4,068 votes. The Senate was evenly divided, thus giving the Republican lieutenant-governor the casting vote; the House numbered 57 Republicans and 48 Democrats.<sup>94</sup>

The small Republican margin in the assembly placed in jeopardy the re-election of John Sherman to the United States Senate. Sherman had slight personal popularity and his pre-election tactics had aroused criticism. Garfield wrote acidly, "He is very conservative for 5 years and then fiercely radical for one. This is his radical year which always comes just before the Senatorial election."<sup>95</sup> Sherman was not very close to President Grant and only lukewarm in supporting him, but reform Republicans preferred Gen. Jacob D. Cox or Governor Hayes or Representative Garfield as more independent. James M. Ashley assumed the management of the anti-Sherman forces. When the Republican caucus met, there was no open opposition to Sherman but not all the members regarded themselves as bound by its action. Garfield, when sounded out, had refused an offer of support from the insurgents,<sup>96</sup> but it was rumored at Washington that an arrangement with the Democrats would make Cox the beneficiary. The possible election of the ex-secretary of the interior as a reform, anti-administration Senator was regarded with some concern.<sup>97</sup> Governor Hayes was also importuned by anti-

<sup>93</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, 587; Reid, *Ohio in the War*, I, 978-9.

<sup>94</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 286.

<sup>95</sup> Smith, *Life and Letters of Garfield*, I, 471.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 475-6.

<sup>97</sup> *Diary and Letters of Hayes*, III, 173-4.



Left to right, top row

Reuben Wood  
William Medill  
Salmon P. Chase

Center row

William Dennison  
David Tod

Bottom row

Rutherford B. Hayes  
Edward F. Noyes  
William Allen

Sherman Republicans to let his name be used. Two members of the assembly called at his home at a late hour on the night before the legislature was to act and tempted him with the possibility of the presidency if he were elected Senator.<sup>98</sup> Hayes, like Garfield, was too good a party man to accept an election by Democratic votes and refused to consent to the use of his name. Later in the night he was aroused by his friend, John G. Deshler, who represented a group of Senators and Representatives, then in secret session at Deshler's house. It was told to Hayes that Sherman was corrupt for he had allegedly bought the votes of two Democrats, and the governor was again urged to yield. Again he refused, and Sherman was elected next day by six votes. Fate rewarded the self-denying Hayes and Garfield with the presidency and left the lesser prize to Sherman.

Three national conventions met in Ohio cities in 1872. The first was that of the Labor Reform party, whose delegates assembled at Columbus, February 20-22, 1872.<sup>99</sup> Justice David Davis of the United States Supreme Court was nominated for president, but later declined and Charles O'Connor of New York was substituted by a second convention. The platform was broadly liberal but the party had little appeal to the voters. O'Connor was later given a nomination by a group of bolting or "straight" Democrats, who would not accept Horace Greeley as the Democratic choice.

The National Prohibition party, organized at Chicago in September, 1869, held its first national nominating convention at Columbus in the opera house, February 22.<sup>100</sup> James Black of Pennsylvania was named as the presidential choice and a reform platform was adopted, though it emphasized the destruction of the liquor traffic as its great purpose. Among Ohioans active in the movement were Gideon Stewart of Norwalk, Elroy M. Avery and J. A. Spencer of Cleveland.

The year 1872 saw the Liberal Republican movement reach its climax. Discontent with the Grant Administration and the course

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 191-4.

<sup>99</sup> Edwin Stanwood, *A History of the Presidency* (Boston, 1898), 335-9.

<sup>100</sup> Case, "Prohibition Party," 373-5; Adrian, Political Significance of the Prohibition Party.

of the Republican party had expressed itself in Ohio in 1871 when Jacob D. Cox, George Hoadly, Stanley Matthews and Friedrich Hassaurek had inaugurated at Cincinnati a movement to reform the Republican party.<sup>101</sup> They favored such measures as amnesty for ex-Confederates, civil service reform, a return to specie payment and tariff reform. "Reunion and Reform" associations including Democrats as members appeared in different parts of the country. Cox was in touch with Carl Schurz, German leader, who was heading a Liberal Republican movement in Missouri. Vallandigham's New Departure had been aimed at reform Republicans but had accomplished little in 1871.

The Cincinnati *Commercial*, independent Republican, under the editorship of Murat Halstead espoused the reform cause and had the assistance of the leading German papers, the *Volksfreund* and the *Volksblatt*.<sup>102</sup> Anti-Grant and anti-tariff, the *Commercial* favored the nomination of Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts, former minister to England, for the presidency on the Liberal Republican ticket. The national convention met at Cincinnati with large crowds in attendance and local pressure exerted for Adams.<sup>103</sup> The forty-four Ohio delegates, led by George Hoadly and Stanley Matthews of Cincinnati, General Roeliff Brinkerhoff and Judge Jacob Brinkerhoff of Mansfield and Judge Rufus P. Spalding of Cleveland, gave their support to Adams, except for two who favored Horace Greeley. Former Governor Jacob D. Cox was the second choice of the Ohioans but his name was never presented, for the Greeley supporters outmaneuvered the Adams men and nominated their favorite on the sixth ballot.

The choice of the crusading, erratic editor of the New York *Tribune* was received with undisguised dismay by the more idealistic liberals. Greeley was a protectionist, was disliked by the Germans, and did not have the confidence of the civil service reformers. The Ohio delegation held a stormy post-convention caucus but

<sup>101</sup> Moore, "Ohio in National Politics, 1865-1896," 263-73, for reform stirrings in Ohio.

<sup>102</sup> See especially April, May, 1872.

<sup>103</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, May 2, 3, 4, 1872; *Diary and Letters of Hayes*, III, 202-3.



could not agree on a program.<sup>104</sup> Hoadly and Matthews denounced the work of the convention and refused to support the ticket, but most of the others eventually accepted Greeley as a lesser evil than Grant. The *Commercial* sought refuge in a benevolent neutrality toward the Liberal Republican candidates but the Germans were generally unreconciled and the reform movement was blighted.

For the Democrats the only course that promised success was a coalition with the Greeley forces, and their State convention of June 27 was agreeable, though a few delegates bolted.<sup>105</sup> The Democratic national convention in July indorsed the Liberal Republican ticket and platform. Senator Thurman, who had little use for new departures and coalitions, accepted the action of the national Democracy, though with a wry face.<sup>106</sup> Of the twenty anti-Grant congressional candidates, ten had been Republicans and were now running with Democratic support.<sup>107</sup> It was a strange spectacle to see such old antislavery radicals as Norton S. Townshend and Milton Sutliff opposing their former comrades in arms, James Monroe and James A. Garfield, who remained orthodox. Indeed, much of the idealism of the old party seemed to have gone with the Liberals.

In the regular Republican ranks Grant was given a loyal support. The State convention of March 27 indorsed his administration and suggested William Dennison as his running mate. However, divisions in the Ohio delegation at the Philadelphia convention caused the former governor to refuse to allow his name to be presented, and the majority voted for Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, the successful candidate.<sup>108</sup> Hayes and Garfield, despite their reform pretensions, convinced themselves that Greeley would be worse than Grant and went on the stump for the latter.

The campaign in Ohio was hard fought and the outcome at first seemed in doubt. Greeley made several speeches in the State, and to counteract his efforts, Senator Henry Wilson and General Ben

<sup>104</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial*, May 4, 1872.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, June 28, 1872.

<sup>106</sup> Moore, "Ohio in National Politics, 1865-1896," 274, quoting from letter in Cleveland *Plain Dealer*; Hare, Thurman, 224.

<sup>107</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 305.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 291-7, 299-300; Cincinnati *Commercial*, June 4, 5, 6, 7, 1872.

Butler of Massachusetts, Speaker James G. Blaine of Maine, Senator John A. Logan of Illinois, General Joseph R. Hawley of Connecticut and other stalwarts came to aid the Ohio oratorical contingent.<sup>109</sup> The strength of party loyalty, the power of party organization and the lukewarmness felt toward Greeley by Democrats seemed to account for the sweeping Republican triumph at the October election when their candidate for secretary of state had a plurality of 14,147 votes. In November Grant had 37,531 more votes than Greeley. James Black, Prohibitionist, polled 2,000 votes, Charles O'Connor, "Straight Democrat," 1,163 votes.<sup>110</sup> Grant received approximately 1,700 more votes than in 1868, while Greeley had added but 7,700 to Seymour's total of that year, though supported by both Democrats and Liberal Republicans. The coalition carried seven of the twenty congressional seats. Two of these were at Cincinnati where the *Enquirer*, the *Commercial* and two large German dailies joined forces against the Republican candidates. Even Rutherford B. Hayes, drafted to save a congressional seat for his party, was defeated by a Liberal Republican.

The victory of 1872 was, in many respects, the greatest the Republicans had ever won. They had withstood a reform wave and a revolt of the liberals in the party to poll in Ohio almost as great a majority as in 1868. Democratic apathy toward Greeley, the still powerful appeal of Grant's name, especially to the soldier element, and the soothing effect of the years of prosperity all played into the hands of the Republicans. Demands for reform in government, a more equitable tariff and an end of radical reconstruction in the South beat in vain against the flag waving, "bloody shirt" appeals of the party in power. Having freed the slaves, preserved the Union and made the black man the equal of the white before the law and at the ballot box, it coasted to victory on the prestige of its humanitarian record.

Yet its crusading fervor had been dissipated. Its old leaders of antislavery days were dead or in retirement, and a new crowd,

<sup>109</sup> Cleveland *Leader*, Sept.-Oct., 1872; *Diary and Letters of Hayes*, III, 207-18; Smith, *Life and Letters of Garfield*, I, 494-7.

<sup>110</sup> Smith, *Republican Party in Ohio*, I, 305-7.

products of the war and the lush years that followed it, was in the saddle. Content with the status quo and the growing favor of business and industrial interests, they pointed with pride to the party's past but had no program for the new problems that loomed ahead. State platforms largely followed the pattern of the national ones. The Ohio Republican declarations of principles in 1871 and 1872 made no mention of any specific State issues. Organization, patronage and party discipline had taken the place of zeal for a cause. Disloyalty to the party that had saved the Union was transmuted into something akin to treason. Veteran antislavery men who had dared to support Greeley were classed with Copperheads. Bolting was the one cardinal sin in post-war politics. The Republican party had come a long way since that raw March day of 1854 when earnest men of all political faiths had assembled at Columbus to voice their protests against what they regarded as a great wrong.

But the Democrats in 1872 were sunk in the lowest depths of despair. The radical party of Jackson's day had swung around in a crazy orbit. Dropping its vaunted devotion to the common man, it had become, after the revolution of 1854, a conservative, anti-Negro, compromising element, an apologist, on the slavery issue, for the Supreme Court that Jackson had defied. Though it recuperated from the defeats of 1854-1856, its new-found conservatism had availed little when dissensions developed over the Lecompton question and the presidential candidacy of Douglas. When the Civil War came, it had sought to make political capital out of the problems of the war only to fall into the dark pit of Copperheadism. Reviving temporarily in 1867 by playing on the race prejudices of southern Ohio, the Democrats had carried the legislature, defeated Negro suffrage and almost elected their State ticket. But the suffrage issue and Pendleton's greenback proposal proved futile against the magic of Grant's name, and defeat was again their portion in 1868 and 1869. The Fifteenth Amendment ended the suffrage issue and prosperity disposed of the greenback question. Then had come Vallandigham's New Departure in 1871, an attempt to turn the party's attention to new issues. While it had been well received,

the results were disappointing when the votes were counted. Nevertheless, the Democratic hosts formed a coalition with the Liberal Republicans in 1872 and the promised land seemed again in sight. Yet again was defeat their portion. Small wonder that, after the election, many Democrats felt that the party's usefulness was at an end and that the organization should be dissolved. Never had the situation seemed so black as in the winter of 1872-1873.

But the imposing facade of Republicanism concealed certain structural weaknesses. Grant's name had seemed to stand for simple honesty and soldierly directness in the management of public affairs despite the blunderings of his first term. When the President in his second administration was revealed in his true colors as a pathetic, inept figure, surrounded and managed by spoils politicians and lobbyists for corrupt business interests, the glamor fell away and popular repudiation followed. Even more disillusioning was the crash of the Nation's business and financial interests in the great Panic of 1873. In the hard times that followed the fissures and imperfections in the American economic system revealed themselves as never before. The Republican party, dependent hitherto on the harmonious cooperation of eastern industrialists and financiers and western farmers, found itself hard put to satisfy both. Ohio, in transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy, became a battle ground for radicals and conservatives. No longer could emotional appeals to Civil War passions suffice to carry the party to victory. Its time of tribulation was at hand.





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